14.27

THE GREAT CONCERN,

OR,

A Serious Warning to a timely and thorough PREPARATION FOR DEATH,

With Helps and Directions in order thereunto.

By *EDWARD PEARSE.*

Being the last that ever he preached.

John 9. 4. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work*

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TO THE READER.

Reader,

IF thou art one, who indeed liveſt in the belief of a future Life, an Eternity of happineſs or miſery, when time and dayes ſhall be no more, I am confident the enſuing Diſcourſe will be grateful and welcome to thee: I make no Apology for its plaineſs, nor am I at all ſolicitous touching the Cenſures I may fall under for publiſhing of it: if thou wilt read it with an upright heart, I queſtion not, but through a bleſſing from above,

it may do thy Soul good; ſure I am, thou wilt find the Argument moſt weighty, and the Concern thereof moſt important: And woe be to that Soul, which miſſeth the deſign it tends to, and aims at. When men come to dye, and do find themſelves launching forth into the vaſt Ocean of Eternity, at leaſt when once they find themſelves encircled in that Ocean, (which quickly they do, when once Death makes its approach) then they ſee, that their great intereſt lay beyond this poor, vain, periſhing World, and the things thereof; then they ſee, that their great Concern was to have look'd and liv'd beyond time and dayes, and have made proviſion for an Eternal ſtate: but alas! alas! then 'tis too late, too late: then they cry out, O Eternity, Eternity! O miſerable Souls that we are! how did ſin and the world blind and bewitch us, that we could not ere now, when 'tis too late, ſee the

the weight of an Eternal intereſt! O blind and brutiſh Creatures, that were taken with carnal and ſenſual things, things pleaſing only to a ſenſual appetite; and forgot God, the chief Good, the things of Heaven, and a bleſſed Eternity, which would have made us happy for ever! Now to prevent theſe doleful lamentations, and ſuch a diſmal and remedileſs ſhipwrack of Eternal Souls, as alſo to ſhew them the path of Life, and to engage them to make ſure of a bleſſed Eternity, while time and dayes laſt, is the deſign of the enſuing Diſcourſe, and of the dying Author in it: And the Lord, the God of all Grace, proſper it in order thereunto. God has kept me for a full half year by the Graves ſide, one while lifting me up, then caſting me down, and now he ſeems to be ſpeedily finiſhing my dayes: to whom through the infinite riches of free Grace, I can with ſome com-

fort

fort and boldneſs ſay, Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly, Amen. And now farewel vain World, farewel Friends and Relations, farewel eating and drinking, and, bleſſed be God, farewel ſin and ſinning: within a few dayes I ſhall ſin no more, nor ever be in a poſſibility of ſinning; but ſhall be like my Lord, and ſhall ſee him, as he is: And laſtly, farewel Reader.

E. P.

There

There is lately Publiſhed, another Treatiſe of the Authors, intituled, *The Beſt Match*; *or*, *The Souls Eſpouſal unto Chriſt*, *Opened and Improved.* Sold by *Jonathan Robinſon* at the Golden Lion in St. *Pauls* Church-yard, and *Bra. Aylmer* at the Three Pigeons in *Cornhill.* Price bound 2 *s.*

ERRATA.

Page 1. in the Contents of the 1ſt. Chap. for *inſtruction*, read *introduction*.
p. 11. l. 14. r. *Pſal.* 90.
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p. 36. l. 17. r. *Heaven.*
p. 50. l. 18. *dele* [*to.*]
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THE *Great Concern*, OR, A PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

Pſalm 39. 13.

O ſpare me that I may recover ſtrength; before I go hence, and be no more.

CHAP. I.

Which contains an Introduction to, and an explication of the words of the Text, with the General truth of them, and therein the foundation of our intended Diſcourſe.

TO walk with God here on earth, while we live; and to be ready to live with God for ever in Heaven, when we come to die; is the great Work we have to do, the great Concern we have to mind, in our

preſent Pilgrimage. To grow great and high in the World, to build our Names and Families, to live a life of ſenſual pleaſures and delights, ſpending our dayes in mirth; theſe are low, mean, poor things; things infinitely beneath the dignity of a Soul, and altogether unworthy of the leaſt of its care and ſolicitude: but to know God, to love God, to obey God, to delight in God, to contemplate the glorious excellencies and perfections of God, to live upon God, and to live to God; upon him as our chief Good and happineſs, and to him as our laſt end; and withal to be found ready at laſt to live with him for ever, to enter upon the beatifical Viſion, and to paſs into that life of love and holineſs, which the Saints and Angels live above, being made perfect in the Viſion and Fruition of the God of Glory; this is truly noble this is worthy of the care and ſolicitude of Souls: to promote theſe things, and more eſpecially the latter, is my deſign in fixing my meditations on this Scripture, which I am the rather induced to do, becauſe I am apprehenſive, that the time of my going hence, when I ſhall be ſeen no more,

is drawing very nigh. The words are a holy and pathetical wiſh and deſire breathed out into the boſome of God, by the man after his own heart; and that when under ſore and heavy afflictions: under grievous ſickneſs, ſay ſome: under great ſtraits and diſtreſſes, by reaſon of *Abſalon's* rebellion, and conſpiracy againſt him, ſay others In this wiſh or deſire of his, you may note three things.

1. What that is which he wiſheth for, or deſires of God; and that is ſparing mercy, *O ſpare me.*

2. The end of this wiſh or deſire of his, and that is the recovery of ſtrength: *O ſpare me that I may recover ſtrength.*

3. The ground or motive which induc'd him to make this deſire for this end; and that was the near approach of his death: in theſe words, *Before I go hence and be no more ſeen.* I will briefly paraphraſe the words for the opening of them, and then give you the ſum of them, as alſo my intendment from them, in one general poſition.

O ſpare me, that is, ceaſe to ſmite and

Ceſſa percutere & affligere, & da mihi pauxillum relaxationis, Mol.

Leniter mecum age, Mar.

Abſtulc aliquantulum manus tuas a flagellando, Menoch.

afflict me, give me a little relaxation, a breathing time; ſo one expounds it: Deal gently and mildly with me; ſayes another. Withdraw thy hand a little from ſcourging me, and mitigate the violence of my affliction; ſay others. *That I may recover ſtrength*: that I may recruit my ſelf a little; ſaith one. That I may have a breathing time before my death, and being well compoſed, may lay down my Spirit, and commit it into thine hand; ſay others: That *I* may grow ſtrong in grace and holineſs; ſay others: That I may finiſh my courſe, and fight a good fight, obtaining the victory through a happy death; ſay others. The ſum is, that *I* may ſet things right in my ſoul, and get into a more ready poſture for my death and diſſolution, which ſeems to be near at hand. *Before I go hence and be no more*; that is, before *I* die, never more to return into this life; before I quit this world, and bid adieu to

Ut recream me, Jun.

Ut reſpirem ante mortem & tranquillus animam meam in manum tuam deponam Mol.

Ut pietate convaleſcam, Menoc.

Antequam morior in hanc vita nunquam reverſurus. Jun.

this

this mortal life, to be no more in the land of the Living, to be no more in this world, to do any thing for God or my Soul: for (as one well obſerves) *David* doth not here ſuppoſe death to be the utter end, or annihilation of man, the putting of a man out of being: but his meaning is, if God did ſtill go on to afflict him, as he had done, he muſt ſuddenly die, ſuddenly go off the Stage of this world, and go down to the bars of death, to the gates of the Grave: where, as to any thing that is to be done for God, or a mans Soul, it is, as if he were out of being: and where he will be kept for ever from returning any more to this life, or any opportunity of ever doing any thing for another world. It is a phraſe like to, and of the ſame importance with that, *Job* 16. 22. Where *Job* ſpeaks of himſelf: *When a few years are come; then ſhall I go the way, whence I ſhall not return*: Not return, that is, not any more to this life; not return to do any thing for GOD or my Soul: The Sum of the whole ſeems to be thus much: the Good mans afflictions were

ſo

ſo preſſing and heavy upon him, that they did even bow him down to the Grave; and he really lookt upon himſelf, as a dying man, as one going down to the duſt of the Death: where he knew full well, nothing was to be done for another life, and from whence there was no return to this life to be expected any more; and therefore he begs a breathing time, a little ſpace, wherein to recover himſelf out of all preſent diſtempers and diſcompoſures of heart, and to ſet all things right in the matters of his Soul; thereby fitting and preparing himſelf the better for his departure out of this world: he begs a time of reſpite, wherein to prepare himſelf, and make ready for a dying hour: this is the Sum of what he drives at, and pleads with God for: accordingly the Obſervation, and therein the Sum of my intendment ſhall be this.

Doct. That 'tis a very deſirable thing, and a buſineſs of the higheſt moment and importance to the Children of Men, to have all things ſet right, well order'd, and compoſed in the matters of their ſouls, before they leave

leave this world; to get all the ſpiritual concerns of their Souls into the beſt poſture they can, before a dying hour comes.

David, an holy man, a man in covenant with God, yea *a man after Gods own heart*, doth yet (you ſee) pray for ſparing mercy, for a breathing-time, a time of reſpite, here in this world; before he goeth off the Stage: and why ſo? *That he might recover ſtrength*, that he might ſet things right in the matters of his Soul; that he might make himſelf more ready, and get his ſpiritual concerns into a better poſture, for a dying Hour: and this he look'd at, and made out after, as that which was moſt deſirable, and of the higheſt importance to him, as indeed 'tis to all. You have a Scripture not unlike to this, Job. 10. 20, 21. *Are not my dayes few? ceaſe then, and let me alone: that I may take comfort a little; before I go, whence I ſhall not return, even to the land of Darkneſs, and of the ſhaddow of Death:* That *I* may take comfort a little; that I may recover a little, that I may have a breathing time, that I may recover my ſelf,

Ut recreem me, Piſc. *Ut me recolligam*. Cha.

ſelf and gather up my Spirits; So I find the phraſe expounded. He ſeems to deſire a breathing time. The better to compoſe himſelf, and the matters of his Soul, for a dying hour. And indeed 'tis the concern of us all, to ſet all things right in our ſouls, and to get into the readieſt poſture, that poſſibly we can, againſt a dying hour comes. I ſhall firſt briefly evince this truth, and then make ſome practical improvement of it.

CHAP. *II.*

Wherein is ſhewn the exceeding great weight of dying Work, and extream difficulty of a dying hour, as the firſt evidence of our Aſſertion.

DYing work, my Beloved, is great work, and a dying hour is a difficult hour; and therefore we had need have all things well order'd, and ready in the matters of our Souls, againſt that time, that work, that hour comes. *I* will lay the weight of dying work, and the difficulty of a dying hour before you in four Propoſitions.

Firſt Propoſition is this, That death in it

it ſelf, and in its own nature (if we look no further) is a very terrible thing; and we had need have all things ſet right in our Souls, all things in order, when we come to encounter with it: The Philoſopher, who lookt not beyond the natural Notion of death, called it the moſt terrible of all terrible things. And in *Job* 18.14. The Holy Ghoſt himſelf calls it; *The King of Terrors*: *His confidence* (ſpeaking of a wicked man) *ſhall bring him to the King of Terrors*; *i. e.* to death, which is moſt formidable; Indeed 'tis therefore call'd the King of Terrors; becauſe it is the greateſt and ſtrongeſt terror, And death muſt needs be terrible in it ſelf.

Πάντων τὸ φοβερῶν φοβερώτατον. Ariſt. *Ad mortem quæ eſt formidoloſiſſima*

1. Becauſe it deprives us of all our ſweet comforts and enjoyments here in this world, and puts an eternal period to our fruition of them: here we enjoy much good, many ſtreams which run pleaſantly on each hand of us (it may be) but when death comes, that deprives us of all. *Naked came I into the world, and naked ſhall I return*, Job. 1.21. So the Apoſtle, *we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we ſhall carry nothing out*, ſpeaking as to our outward comforts here

here, 1 *Tim.* 6. 7. The *Pſalmiſt* to the ſame effect, *Pſa.* 49. 17. ſpeaks of a rich man; *He ſhall carry nothing away: His glory* (ſaith he) *ſhall not deſcend after him.* Death, as one obſerves, is the greateſt Leveler in the world; It levels Scepters and Plow-ſhares, it makes the Prince as poor as the Peaſant.

Mors Sceptra ligonibus æquat.

2. Becauſe it diſſolves the union between the Soul and the Body: Death is indeed the rending of body and Soul, (thoſe old and loving Companions) aſunder. Now all diſunions, (as a worthy Divine obſerves) are uncomfortable, and ſome diſunions are terrible: And, as ſome diſunions are terrible, ſo thoſe are of all others moſt terrible, that do rend them from us, which are moſt dear to us: Now what union ſo near as that between the Soul and body? and therefore, what diſunion ſo terrible, as the diſſolution of this union? The diſſolving the Union between a man and his wife is terrible; becauſe they are nearly united each to other: but the diſſolving the union between Soul and body, is more terrible, becauſe the union is more near and cloſe: A man and his wife *are one fleſh*; but the Soul and

body

body make but one perſon: now Death diſſolves this union: while we live the Soul dwels in the body, informs the body, acts in and by the body; it hath a great influence upon, and is greatly influenced by the body: But when Death comes, then the Soul and body part, 'till the Reſurrection; *one returning to the duſt, whence it came, the other to God, who gave it*, Eccleſ. 12. 7.

3. It is the deſtroying and demoliſhing of the body of Man, that famous and curious fabrick, and a bringing it into duſt and putrefaction, *Pſa.* 90. 3. It turns a living body into a dead carcaſs, a lifeleſs lump of clay, and cauſeth it to become meat for worms to feed on, *Job.* 19. 26. The body of Man is a very curious piece of workmanſhip, ſuch as wherein the infinite power and wiſdome of God is much ſeen and manifeſted, *Pſa.* 139. 14, 15. But when Death comes, it marrs and demoliſhes all, ſtains all its beauty, and draws a veil upon all its Glory. Sickneſs often makes a mans beauty to *conſume away like a Moth*, as you have it, *Pſal.* 39. 11. But Death utterly defaces it, and draws a veil upon it; that turns his beauty into

to blackneſs and deformity. One of the Ancients ſtanding by *Cæſar*'s Tomb, wept, ſaying, where is now the beauty of *Cæſar*? what now is become of all his magnificence? In a wotd, as life is the ſweeteſt of all outward mercies; ſo death is the ſharpeſt of all outward afflictions: The pains of it are pains to a Proverb; the ſorrows of it are ſorrows to a Proverb: *The ſorrows of death compaſs me about*, Pſal. 116. 3. Now if death be thus terrible in it ſelf; then judge ye whether we had not need to have all things ready, and in order when it comes.

Ubi nunc eſt pulchritudo CÆſaris! quo abiit magnificentia ſua?

Second Propoſition is; That in a dying hour the Devil is moſt fierce and terrible in his aſſaults and temptations upon the Soul. The Devil is in Scripture called a *roaring Lyon*: And is uſually moſt ſo againſt the poor people of God, when they come to die: *then he hath wrath, becauſe he knows his time is ſhort*: to allude to that *Rev.* 12. 12. when a man or woman comes to die, the Devil knows he hath but a ſhort time to tempt, to vex, to terrifie that Soul in; and therefore then uſually he exerciſes great wrath; then he ſtirs up all his wrath, all his malice, all his cruelty againſt

gainſt him; he ſees, this is the laſt caſt he is like to have for it, the laſt onſet he is ever like to make upon the Souls Faith and Comfort; and that now the battle is to be won or loſt for ever; therefore now he roars and rages terribly indeed; now he diſcharges all his murdering pieces againſt the Soul, to make batteries if poſſible, upon the Souls Fort of Salvation, and to ſhake its foundation of life and happineſs. The Devil is the enemy of Souls, *Mal.* 13. 25. and his enmity works eſpecially one of theſe two wayes. Either Firſt to keep them from life and happineſs: and here he acts rather like an Angel of Light, than a roaring Lyon: he works rather in a way of Flattery, then in a way of Terror: hence we read of his *Wiles*, *Methods*, *Devices*, and the like, his cunning and fallacious workings, thereby to deſtroy Souls. Or, Secondly, To trouble and torment Souls in their way to life and happineſs: and here he is indeed like a roaring Lyon, and never more, then when we come to die. There are among others two ſeaſons, wherein the Devil is moſt fierce and tirrible

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in his aſſaults upon the Soul. The firſt is; when a man is going from Sin to Grace: when he is fully reſolved to cloſe with Chriſt, to ſhake off the yoke of Sin, and to take upon him the yoke of *Jeſus*. The ſecond is; When a man is going from Grace to Glory: when he is going off the Stage of time to Eternity: when a man begins to live the ſpiritual life, and when a Man comes to die the natural death. *I* know, firſt, That as for his own children, he uſually lets them alone, when they come to die: he is afraid to have them diſturbed: though ſometimes he cannot forbear; but torments them before their time. *Secondly*, God can, and ſometimes does chain him up, ſo that he ſhall not be able to trouble and torment the Saints in their paſſage out of this world: yet ſtill *I* ſay, for the moſt part he does fiercely aſſault them then; and doubtleſs, there are but very few of the Children of God, but do meet with very ſore aſſaults from Sathan, when they come to die: Then he turns *Accuſer*; then he charges the Soul with all its Sins, then he tells him, he is an hypocrite, that all his profeſſion hath been nothing but a deluſion; and the

the like; Now is Sathan thus fierce and terrible in his aſſaults upon the Soul in a dying hour? ſurely then we had need have all ready againſt that hour comes.

3. The Third Propoſition is this: that in a dying hour Conſcience, is moſt awakened; and ſo moſt quick and ſmart in its threats and charges againſt the Soul; if all be not right within; and therefore we had need have all ſo in that hour. There are three ſeaſons in which Conſcience is moſt awake in the Soul. Firſt, when God begins to deal with the Soul in order to Life and Salvation; then God lets Conſcience looſe upon a man, hence we read of them, that they *were pricked at their heart*, In the ſence of Sin, the word is, they were pricked through and through, *Acts* 2. 37. And ſaith *Paul*, *when Sin revived, I died*, *Rom.* 7.9. That is, in the ſight of my ſin, which was wrought in me by the Law of God, I was made to ſee my ſelf loſt and miſerable, and awak'ned out of my Security. Secondly, when the Soul is under ſome ſmart and notable affliction from the hand of God: This is evident in that inſtance of *Joſephs* brethren, whoſe conſciences were awa-

awakened, when they were in diſtreſs and charged them with the guilt of their ſin in ſelling their Brother, *Gen.* 42. 21. Thirdly, when a man comes to die, when the viſions of death and the grave are before him: Oh you little think, how ſtrict conſcience will be in its ſearch, how ſharp in its charge, and how ſevere in its cenſure in a dying hour: then if there be but the leaſt frown in Gods face towards the Soul, the leaſt flaw in his peace, the leaſt blot, or blur in his evidences for heaven; if there be but the leaſt ſtain upon the Spirit, the leaſt ſin unpardoned, unrepented of; it is a thouſand to one, but conſcience will take notice of it, and charge the Soul with it. O Sirs, you will find a great deal of difference between Conſcience upon a bed of eaſe, and Conſcience upon a Sick-bed; between Conſcience in an hour of health and worldly proſperity, and Conſcience in a dying hour: in the one, great things bear but little weight; but in the other little things uſually bear great weight in Conſcience: then the language of Conſcience to the Soul is, theſe and theſe things haſt thou done; thus

thus and thus things ſtand with thee; at beſt, grace is thus and thus weak, corruptions thus and thus ſtrong, temptations thus and thus prevalent, the heart thus and thus out of frame, the ſpirit thus and thus alienated from God, and the like: hence 'tis that at death there are ſuch Confeſſions, as you have ſometimes from men and women, that now they will ſend for ſome godly Miniſter or Chriſtian to pray with them and for them; though perhaps they could not endure Prayer all their life-time before: Now if in a dying hour Conſcience be thus quick and ſmart in its threats and charges againſt the Soul; then ſurely we had need, and 'tis greatly our concern, to have all ready, all in order, againſt that hour comes.

The fourth Propoſition is this, That in a dying hour we ſhall have to do with God in a very ſtupendious and amazing way, in ſuch a way as may well ſtartle and affright us to think of it: we are ſaid *to have to do with God* here, *Heb.* 4. 13. we have here to do with God in Duties, in Ordinances, in Mercies, in Afflictions: indeed we had as good never have to do with theſe; un- 4.

leſs we have to do with God in theſe: but though we have to do with God here, while we live; yet know, we ſhall ha e to do with God in another-gueſs way, when we come to dye; in ſuch a way as may well overwhelm us to think of it. I ſhall give it you in three ſteps: Then we have to do with God immediately: with God immediately, as our Judg: with God immediately, as our Judg for Eternity: And O how loud do theſe things call upon us to get all in order in the matters of our ſoul, againſt a dying hour comes?

1. When a man comes to dye, he has to do with God immediately; and that is an aſtoniſhing thing. In death the body crumbles to duſt; but *the ſoul returneth to God, that gave it*: ſo the Holy Ghoſt tells us, *Eccl.* 12. 7. The body, which came from the duſt, crumbles to duſt again: but the Soul, that goeth into Gods immediate preſence, to deal, and to treat with him, as it were face to face: The Soul is always with God, and cannot poſſibly be out of his preſence, *Pſal.* 139. 7. And yet here the Holy Ghoſt tells us, when we dye, the Soul returns to God, intimating, that

that then the Soul goes into the immediate preſence of God, and has more immediately to do with him, then here he was ever wont to have: then he beholds his naked Majeſty and Glory: Now what an aſtoniſhing thing is this? You will find (if you obſerve) that the Saints of God, yea the holieſt of them, when they have dealt with God in a more immediate way than ordinary, they have been overwhelmed by it: Take for an inſtance *Daniel*, who, upon receiving Viſions from God, tells us, *there remained no ſtrength in him: That his comlineſs was turned into corruption*, *Dan.* 10. 8. I might inſtance alſo in *John*, who upon a view of, and converſe with Chriſt, that was a little more immediate than ordinary, *fell down at his feet, as dead*, *Rev.* 1. 17. Alſo that of *Jacob*, *I have ſeen the Lord face to face, and yet my life is preſerved*, (ſayes he) intimating, it was a wonder, that he could ſo immediately ſee God, and live, *Gen.* 32. 10. Now if we are to deal with God immediately, when we come to dye, we had need have all in order, before a dying hour comes.

2. When a man comes to dye, he has to do with God immediately, as his Judg; as one that is to try him for his life; to paſs ſentence upon his Soul; to determine his ſtate in righteouſneſs, meaſuring out life, or death, happineſs, or vengeance to him in the other world: And is not this an aſtoniſhing and an amazing thing? Then (ſaith *Solomon*, ſpeaking of death) *ſhall the duſt return to earth, as it was, and the ſpirit return to God, who gave it*, * Eccl. 12. 7. At death the Spirit returns to God; but it is to God, as a Judg, to determine his future condition for him. *We muſt all ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and every one muſt give an account of himſelf to God*: ſo the Scripture tells us, Rom. 10. 12. And, *it is appointed for all men once to dye, and after that the Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. when a man comes to dye, that which is immediately before him, is the Judgment of God; the ſtrict, the righteous, the impartial Judgment of God: then away goes the Soul into the immediate preſence of God, as ſitting upon a Throne of Judgment, to paſs a ſentence of life, or death, ſalvation, or damnation upon him: And (be-

* *Hic corporis corruptibilitas ac animæ immortalitas (ut quæ poſt mortem Dei judicio ſiſtitur, vel beanda, vel damnanda) clarè exprimitur.* Glaſ. Rhet. Sac.

(believe it) we had need have all things ſet right, and well order'd in our Souls, when we come thus to deal with him: we had need have all things well order'd, and ſet right in the matters of our Souls, when we come to deal with God, but as ſitting upon a Throne of Grace: but much more, when we come to deal with him, as ſitting upon a Throne of Judgment, to conclude and determine our future condition, what it ſhall be. Judgment is an aſtoniſhing and terrifying thing; *the hearing of it made Felix tremble*: or (as the word is) it turned him into terror or affrightment, *Acts* 24. 25. And the Apoſtle calls it, *the terror of the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. Now when a man comes to dye, then he ſayes, or may ſay, now I am to deal with the great God, the Judg of all: now I muſt appear before his righteous Tribunal, and have the ſtate of my Soul determined for life, or death, ſalvation, or damnation in the other world. O how great a thing is this!

Formidabile illud judicium. Beza.

3. When a man comes to dye, he has to do with God immediately, as his Judg, for Eternity: and this ſpeaks it yet more terrifying and aſtoniſhing:

For though a man is then to deal with God immediately, and that as his Judg too; yet if it were but for a time, for ſome ſhort term of years, it would not be altogether ſuch a terrifying and amazing thing: but alas! it is for Eternity; and therefore his Judgment is called *Eternal Judgment*, *Heb.* 6. 2. Hence *Auſtin*, ſpeaking of death, calls it *Oſtium Æternitatis*, the Gate of Eternity: *i. e.* the gate or door, that lets men out into Eternity; an Eternity of life, or death, ſalvation, or damnation: the ſentence, which God will then paſs upon the Soul, will be an eternal ſentence; and the Soul muſt be eternally under the execution of it, whether it be for life, or death, ſalvation, or damnation. When a man comes to dye, he then ſees himſelf launching forth into the great Ocean of Eternity; he ſees his eternal all to be immediately at ſtake, and his eternal ſtate to be immediately determined by the great and holy God: now he ſees, he muſt ſhoot the great gulf, and take up his abode in the Eternal Region: This fills him with amazement. O now, ſayes he, a ſentence muſt paſs upon me once for all:

all: now I muſt ſhoot the great gulf; now I muſt launch forth into the great Ocean, where neither bounds, nor bottom is to be found for ever: now I muſt enter upon eternal Joyes, or eternal Flames; an endleſs life, either with God or Devils, in Heaven or Hell: now I ſhall find Infiniteneſs and Eternity combine to do their utmoſt, to make me happy or miſerable for ever: now I muſt become the immediate object either of infinite wrath, or infinite love, infinite hatred, or infinite delight, and that for ever: Now I muſt hear from God, either *come thou bleſſed*, or *depart thou curſed*, and that for ever: And O what an aſtoniſhing thing is this! O Eternity, Eternity! O vaſt Eternity! O great Eternity! O boundleſs Eternity! One ſerious view of it is enough to amaze a poor ſoul, looking upon it at a diſtance: but how much more amazing muſt it needs be, when it ſhall be immediately before the Soul, and he ſees he muſt enter upon it the next hour? O then it will be amazing indeed, aſtoniſhing indeed. This one thing, Eternity, puts infinite ſweetneſs into mercies, and infinite bitterneſs into

ſufferings: the thoughts of this was that, which did ſo much amaze that good man, who ſitting in a deep muſe a long time, and being askt the reaſon of it, was ſilent, and being askt again and again at length broke into theſe words, *for ever, for ever, for ever, for ever*; and for near a quarter of an hour together ſpake nothing elſe: thereby telling them that asked him, that it was the thoughts of this ſame for ever, that ſo much amuſed him: And if you were more in the thoughts of the weight of Eternity, you would ſee it were an aſtoniſhing thing indeed: and this is that which makes dying work, ſuch a weighty work, and a dying hour ſuch a difficult hour. I will cloſe this head, and with that this demonſtration, with a ſaying I have read in one of the Ancients: *That is not to be accounted* (ſayes he) *an evil death, which has had a good life preceeding it, nor doth any thing make death terrible, but that which followes death; therefore they which muſt neceſſarily die are not much to concern themſelves, what falls out to cauſe death, but whither by death they are conſtrain'd to go, whither death carries them.* It is a great ſaying, and

Mala mors putanda non eſt quam vita præceſſerit bona: neque enim facit malam mortem niſi quod ſequitur mortem, &c. Aug de Civit. Dei lib. 1. 11.

and indeed 'tis no great matter, when we die, or how we die, or what is the occaſion of our death: but it is whither death carries us; and where death ſets us down; whether in a bleſſed, or wretched Eternity; whether with God, or devils; in heaven, or hell. Well then, if death be thus terrible in its own nature; if in a dying hour the devil be ſo fierce and terrible in his aſſaults upon Souls: If Conſcience be ſo awakened and ſmart in its charges and accuſations: if then we muſt have to do with God immediately, and as our Judge, yea as our Judge for Eternity, as one that will determine the eternal condition of our ſouls, in unſpeakable happineſs or unſpeakable miſery: Then ſurely dying work is great work, and a dying hour is a difficult hour: it then greatly concerns us to have all ready, and all in order in the matters of our ſouls, againſt the time thereof comes.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Which ſhews the Glory, Sweetneſs, and Bleſſedneſs of the attainment of having all things ſet right in the matters of our Souls, before a dying hour comes, which will further evince the truth aſſerted;

AS dying work is weighty work, and a dying hour is a difficult hour; ſo to have all things ſet right, all well order'd & compoſed, in the matters of our ſouls, againſt ſuch an hour comes, is an high, a ſweet, a bleſſed attainment, an attainment which carries infinite ſweetneſs and deſireableneſs in it: a taſte of which I ſhall give you in two things onely. (1.) Hereby we come to be glorious conquerors over death and the grave. (2) Hereby we come to have an abundant entrance miniſtred to us into heaven and glory: And, my Beloved, what more ſweet and deſirable than this? ſurely this ſpeaks it to be a very ſweet and bleſſed attainment.

1. Hereby we come to be glorious Conquerors over death and the grave. Death is an enemy, 'tis the laſt enemy the

the Children of God have to grapple and conflict with : *The laſt enemy that is to be deſtroyed is death*, 1 Cor. 15. 26. and being the laſt enemy; in conquering this, they conquer all; conquering this they are compleat and eternal conquerors : Now by having all things ſet right in the matters of our ſouls, all things ready, and in order for a dying hour, we come to conquer this laſt enemy; yea to get a glorious conqueſt over it : Hereby *death comes to be ſwallowed up of victory*, as you have the expreſſion, 1 *Cor.* 15. 54. Hereby *we are more than Conquerors over it*, Rom. 8. 37. Take the conqueſt, which this gives us over death, in theſe three things.

1. Hereby the Soul is carried above the fear of death : In *Heb.* 2. 15. we read of ſome, *who all their life-time were ſubject to bondage through fear of death :* And, if in their life-time, much more when they come to a dying hour. Then Conſcience (as you have heard) is more awake : Oh the fears, the terrors, the hell upon Earth, that the ſight of deaths approach fills many a poor ſoul withal ! But now take a Soul, that has all things right, and in order in his

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ſpiritual concerns, and he is carried above the fear of this King of terrors; and that when made as terrible, as the wit and malice of men can poſſibly make it: he can converſe with his laſt enemy as one, that hath loſt his ſting and power; and ſo without the leaſt fear or diſmayedneſs of ſpirit: *None of theſe things move me*, ſaies *Paul*, *neither count I my life dear unto my ſelf, that I may finiſh my courſe with Joy*: his afflictions did not move him, did not terrifie him: but if death ſhould come, what then? Why that ſhall be welcome too, ſaith he, *Acts* 20. 24. who is afraid of a conquer'd enemy, an enemy which a man ſeeth dead and ſlain in the field? one that has all things ready for a dying hour, he ſees death to be a conquered enemy, an enemy conquered by the death of Chriſt; and ſo is carried above the fear of it.

2. Hereby the Soul is inabled in a holy manner to triumph over death, and even to ſcorn and contemn it; which is an higher conqueſt ſtill. A man that has all things ſet right, and well order'd in the matters of his Soul, he is not onely carried above the fear of death; but he rides in triumph over

over it, as one that divideth the ſpoile: he can with boldneſs and comfort challenge this laſt enemy of his, and even dare it to do its worſt to him. *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? (ſaith the Apo:) the ſting of death is ſin, the ſtrength of ſin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 1 Cor. 15.55,56,57. As if he ſhould ſay, death, you talk of a ſting; but where is it? Grave you would threaten us with victory and overthrow; but do your worſt; conquer us, if you can. As a man that has diſarmed his enemy, thrown him upon his back, ſaies to him; O Sir, where is your ſword? where is your piſtol? where is the execution you threatened? do your worſt.

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be able, Solemnly to chooſe and deſire death; yea to exult, and rejoyce in death; as that which of an enemy is become a friend, and an inlet into all happineſs to him. So 2 *Cor.* 5.5,6, 8. *Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who hath al-*

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ſo given unto us the earneſt of his ſpirit. Therefore we are alwayes confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord: We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord. So Phil. 1. 22, 23. *But if I live in the fleſh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I ſhall chooſe, I wot not: for I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.* Mark, he deſires death, he chooſes death, as that which is a friend to him, and an inlet into his happineſs. Such an one can ſay, as I have read a German Divine did, when dying. *I am ready* (ſaies he) *and deſire to be gone out of this life, in which all things are not only full of miſeries and calamities; but which is to be lamented, all things are full-fraught with ſins: I ſay, I deſire to paſs into that life in which there is no ſin, no miſery.* Yea more, ſuch an one can exult, and re oyce in death. *Luke* 2. 29. 30. *Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation,*

Paratus ſum & cupio emigrare de hac vitâ, in quâ non ſolum omnia plena ſunt miſeriarum & calamitatum; ſed quod deplorandum omnia referta ſunt peccatis, &c. Mel. Adam in vitam Pollionis

tion. They are words of joy and exultation in the ſight of deaths approach. The child of ſome tender, and indulgent Father, being abroad at ſojourn, and ſeeing a meſſenger come from his Father, to fetch him home: how does he exult and rejoyce? O (ſayes he) my Father has ſent for me home; now I muſt go to live with my Father, to eat and drink at my Fathers Table, to live in my Fathers preſence, enjoy my Fathers love and counſels: and this he rejoyces in, and exultingly embraces the meſſenger. 'Tis the very caſe here; the Soul having all things ready, all things ſet right within, when death comes, 'tis but as a meſſenger to him, to fetch him home to his Fathers houſe, which he can welcome and embrace with joy. O (ſayes he) my Father has ſent for me home, home to Heaven, there to live immediately in his preſence, and upon his fulneſs; and now I ſhall be for ever with my Father; now I ſhall for ever feaſt my Soul with my Fathers love, and the conſtant views of my Fathers face: now I ſhall *ſee him face to face*, whom here I could never *ſee, but through a glaſs darkly*: now I ſhall

ſhall ſee, and be for ever in the embraces of my ſweet Lord; my *Lord*, that bled for me, that died for, that *trod the wine-preſs alone* for me: now ſhall *I* enter into *the glorious liberty of the Children of God*: I have hitherto been in bondage, in bondage to Satan, in bondage to my own heart, which has all along wretchedly impoſed upon me; but now I ſhall enter upon the glorious liberty of the Children of God: now I ſhall *partake of the inheritance of the Saints in light*: Now I ſhall bathe my ſoul in the chryſtal ſtreams of undefiled pleaſures, running freſh along the banks of Eternity at my fathers right hand: now I ſhall ſpend a whole Eternity in praiſes, doxologies, and hallelujahs to God and the Lamb: now *I* ſhall have all my ſpots and wrinckles, my ſins and ſorrows done away at once: now ſhall *I* ſigh no more, and which is infinitely better, *I* ſhall ſin no more for ever: no more complain of dark viſions, and ſhort viſits from God; no more complain of diſtances and alienation between him and my ſoul for ever: there ſhall be no more interruption of communion with my ſweet Saviour; but *I* ſhall

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ſtand in his preſence, and behold his face for evermore. *In* a word, hereby death the King of Terrors becomes the King of Comforts to the Soul; and a man comes to die both happily and comfortably. Some men die, neither happily nor comfortably, and ſuch is the caſe of all, who die out of Chriſt; they die in their ſins, they die to be damn'd for ever. *S*ome die happily, but not comfortably; ſuch is the caſe of poor Chriſtians, dying under diſſertion, whoſe *S*un ſets in a cloud; they die in the dark, not knowing what ſhall become of their *S*ou's to eternity, which yet go ſafe to heaven, being built upon the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Some die both happily and comfortably; ſuch is the caſe of all thoſe, who have all things ſet right (between God and them) all things ready and in order, before a dying hour comes. Some die preſumptuouſly, thinking all is right and well in the matters of their Souls; when indeed nothing is ſo: that is ſad for eternity: the Lord deliver your *S*ouls and mine from ſuch an *Exit*. Some die tremblingly or doubtingly, not knowing how things are with them, whether well or ill, but they fear ill;

that is ſad, at leaſt for time: The Lord carry us above ſuch an *Exit*. Some(*viz.* well order'd Souls)die fiducially, knowing things to be right between God and them; and that is comfortable both for time and eternity. Well then, if hereby we come to have ſuch a glorious victory over death and the grave, it muſt then be a great attainment to have all things in order between God and us; and conſequently greatly our concern concern to have things ſo.

2. Hereby we come to have a rich and glorious entrance miniſtred to us into everlaſting life, and glory, into heaven and bleſſedneſs. As hereby we come to be glorious Conquerors over the natural death; ſo hereby we come to have a rich and glorious entrance miniſtred to us into the eternal life, which alſo carries much ſweetneſs and bleſſedneſs in it. 2 *Pet.*1.5.11. *And beſides this giving all diligence, add to your faith vertue, and to vertue knowledge* &c. That is grow as compleat in grace, as poſſibly you can, make ſure of your ſalvation, make all ready in the matters of your Souls: and what then? *So an entrance ſhall be miniſtred to you abundantly into the ever-*

everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. And is not this a bleſſed attainment? Take this in three things.

1. Hereby the Soul comes to enjoy much of Heaven, here upon earth; much of bleſſedneſs and glory, whileſt on this ſide bleſſedneſs and glory, then hath a man an abundant entrance miniſtred unto him into heaven and glory, when he hath much of heaven and glory given out to him here on Earth, large Earneſts, and firſt fruits: and this the Soul has that hath all things right in the matters of his ſpiritual ſtate, all things ready and in order within: hence we read ſometimes of *the earneſt*, ſometimes of *the firſt fruits of the Spirit*, Eph. 1. 14. Ro. 8. 28. And the Soul that is moſt ready, has the greateſt earneſts and firſt fruits, that is to ſay, the greateſt beginnings of heaven, here upon earth: For that which makes us ready, for a dying hour, is ſomething of heaven dropped into the Soul here.

2. Hereby he comes to go triumphingly from earth to heaven; to go to heaven and glory with a crown upon his head, and is not this a ſweet attainment? then hath a man an abundant

entrance into heaven and glory, when he goes triumphingly thither: when a man paſſes to heaven and glory with viſions thereof in his eye, and prelibations thereof in his Soul; with a clear witneſs and evidence in his Spirit, that he is going to poſſeſs the fulneſs thereof, with God and Chriſt for ever: when a a man enters into life without any rebukes from God, or his own Conſcience, without any ſtumbling through doubting or unbelief: This is the happineſs of ſuch, as have all things well in their Souls, before a dying hour comes. It is with ſuch in death, as it was with *John* in viſion, *Rev.* 4. 1. They, as it were, *hear a voice from hevaen, ſaying; come up hither; and immediately they are in the Spirit.* Some poor Souls croud into heaven, through a throng of doubts, and unbelief, difficulties and deſpondencies, through many fears, and temptations; inſomuch that it might be truely ſaid of them, that they are *ſcarcely ſaved*, as the Apoſtles expreſſion is: but others go through none of theſe, they go triumphantly with a crown upon their heads, as it were. So *Paul* 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8, *I am now ready to be offer'd, and*

and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give me at that day; and not unto me onely, but to all them alſo, that love his appearing. Methinks I ſee, how this holy Soul went triumphingly to the throne of God and the Lamb. When *David and the Houſe of Iſrael brought up the Ark of the Lord, it was with ſhouting' and with the ſound of the Trumpet*: So when ſuch a Soul goes to reſt, 'tis with a kind of ſhouting and triumph: among the Saints themſelves, who all reach the ſame heaven and glory at laſt. There is a very great deal of difference in their death, and in their going to that hea en and glory. As (you know) two ſhips may arrive at the ſame harbour, yet with much difference as to the manner of their coming in: the one makes a ſhift to get in; but 'tis with her Anchors loſt, her ſails rent her flags down, her maſts broken, and the like: but the other comes in bravely, riding, as 'twere, in triumph, with her ſails ſpread, her anchors ſafe, her

flags flying, her trumpets ſounding, and her mariners ſhouting. So great a difference there is in the paſſing of Saints to heaven and bleſſedneſs: now what an attainment muſt it be to go with ſhouting and triumph?

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be admitted to, and inveſted with an eminent fullneſs of bleſſedneſs and glory with God for ever: then has a man an abundant entrance into heaven and glory, when he is admitted to, and inveſted with an eminent fulneſs of glory and bleſſedneſs in heaven for ever; and this he hath, who has all right and ready in the concerns of his Soul, when he comes to die: Such a one receives a full reward, as the expreſſion is 2 *Epiſtle of John* 8. and *has much fruit abounding to his account Phil.*4.7. And O what a ſweet and bleſſed attainment does this ſpeak it to be, to have all in order, againſt a dying hour comes? Now if it be ſuch an attainment to have things ſet right, and in order in our Souls, againſt a dying hour, then ſurely it muſt needs be highly our concern to have al tih ngs ſo.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Which ſhews the ſtate of men and women under death, as a further evidence of our aſſertion.

AS to have all things ready, and in order, when a dying hour comes, is an high, and glorious attainment; ſo ſuch is the ſtate and condition of men and women under death, that it cannot but be highly their concern to have all things ſet right, all things ready in the matters of their *S*ouls, when they come to die: this *I* will ſet before you in three Propoſitions,

Firſt Propoſition is this; *That ſuch is the ſtate and condition of men and women under death, that there is no return for them into this life any more for ever.* When once a man's Sun is ſet, it never riſes more: When once a man has his *Exit*, is gone off the ſtage of this world, he never enters more; there is no more any part to be acted here by him, this you have in the text: *before I go hence and be no more*, that is no more in this world.

So *Job* 7.7.8.9.10. *O remember, that my life is wind; mine eyes ſhall no more ſee good: the eye of him that hath ſeen me, ſhall ſee me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not: As the cloud is conſumed and vaniſheth away; So he that goeth down to the grave, ſhall come up no more. He ſhall return no more to his houſe, and his place ſhall know him no more.* Again *Job* 10.20.21. *Are not my dayes few? ceaſe then, and let me alone; that I may take comfort a little; before I go, whence I ſhall not return, even into the land of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death.* And again *ch.*16.22. *When a few dayes are come, then ſhall I go the way, whence I ſhall not return*: All ſhewing, that when a man is once gone off the ſtage of this world, there is no return for him any more.

Second Propoſition, is this; *That ſuch is the ſtate of men and Women under death, that there is nothing to be done for their Souls: there is nothing to be mended, that is amiſs nothing to be ſet in order, that ſhall be found out of order.* Death (my beloved) is not the time of working, but of receiving the reward of our work:

work: death leaves us under an utter and eternal impoſſibility of ever doing any thing for another world: Therefore *Whatever thine hand findeth to do* (ſaith *Solomon*) *do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor councel in the grave, whither thou goeſt*, Eccleſ. 9. 10. And *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me; while it is day: becauſe the night cometh, when no man can work*, ſaith *Chriſt*, Joh. 9. 4. Death is a ſtate of darkneſs, and it deprives us of all helps, advantages, and opportunities of ever doing any thing for the good of our Souls: there is no repenting, no believing, no turning to God in the grave: there is no aſſuring pardon of ſin; no getting an intereſt in Chriſt; no making our calling and election ſure there: O no; theſe things muſt be done now, or they can never be done; and if they be never done, our Souls are for ever undone. 'Twas an Epicurean ſaying of him, who ſaid, *Eat, drink, play; for after death there is no pleaſure:* but it would, be a Chriſtian ſaying to ſay to you, and my own Soul, love God, pray to him, ſeek his face, repent, believe, make ſure of Chriſt; for

Ede, bibe, lude, poſt mortem nulla voluptas.

for after death none of theſe are to be done: they muſt be done: here, or never.

Third Propoſition is this, *That ſuch is the ſtate of men and women under death, that the Soul is actually and irreverſibly ſtated and concluded in his eternal condition: The Souls eternal ſtate is abſolutely fixt, and unchangeably determined without any alteration for ever.* 'Tis an obſervation among the School-men, that look what befel the Angels that ſinned, that in death befalls wicked men, thoſe that are not ready for a dying hour: the Angels immediately upon their ſinning were ſtated in an irreverſible condition of wo and miſery: And wicked men, unready Souls, immediately upon death are irreverſibly ſtated in, alike eternal condition; they are eternally ſealed up under damnation: And the devils may as ſoon get out of thoſe chains of eternal darkneſs, whereinto they are caſt, and in which they are locked up, being reſerved unto judgement; as ſuch perſons can change, or reverſe that condition The Truth is, death, when ever, or wherever it comes, is a determining thing, it concludes the

the Soul for ever under an unalterable ſtate of life or death, of happineſs or miſery: For *as the Tree falls ſo it lies*, Eccl. 11. 3. hence in death *the Spirit*, the Soul is ſaid, *to return to God*, Eccl. 12. 7. Upon which a learned Man has this obſervation: *God* (ſaith he) *receives the Soul of Man, when he dies, to himſelf; and having receiv'd it, he delivers it either to the Holy Angels, that by them it might be carried to heaven, if it hath been holy and good; or he delivers it to the evil Angels, by them to be dragged into hell, if it hath been ungodly*: Hence the *Apoſtle* tels us; *after death comes judgment*. Heb. 9. 27. By which is meant the particular judgment of every man and woman immediately upon death: which is nothing elſe but the ſtating of the Soul in an eternal condition: hence alſo, when *Dives* is brought in, deſiring that *Lazaras* might *dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue*; anſwer is made, that it cannot be, for as much as there is no going for any, either from hell to heaven, or from heaven to hell: becauſe *there is a gulph fixed*, Luke 16. 26. Noteing the unalterableneſs of that ſtate, which death ſets men down in, whe-

Deus animā morientis ad ſe recipit, receptam tradit vel Angelis ſanctis ut eam portent in cœlum, pia fuerit; vel è contrà. Piſc in loc.

whether of happineſs or miſery. Well then if ſuch be the ſtate of men and women under death, as we have heard, then ſurely 'tis highly our concernment to have all ready, all in order, againſt a dying hour comes. Having given you thus briefly the demonſtration of the point, I ſhall make ſome practical improvement of it.

CHAP. V.

Wherein ſinners are convinced of their ſin and folly in their neglect of this concern with ſix weighty pleas or arguments: to ſet home this conviction, and awaken them to their work.

AND is this indeed a concern of ſo much weight and moment to us? Then how great is their folly, and what enemies are they to their own Souls, who live in the neglect of this great buſineſs and concern? (which the moſt of men do) God is pleaſed to ſpare, yea wonderfully to ſpare them for dayes, for weeks, for months, for years together, and

and that for this very end', that they ſhould make themſelves ready, and ſet all right in the matters of their ſouls, againſt a dying hour comes: but woe, and alas for them? this they mind not, this they concern not themſelves about; but do live in a totall neglect thereof; than which what greater folly can they be guilty of. Pray, mind what God himſelf ſpeaks in this caſe *Deut.* 32.28, 29. where he ſaith concerning *Iſrael*, *they were a nation void of counſell, nor was there any underſtanding in them*: and what then? *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this; that they would conſider their latter end.* Obſerve here two things atteſted and verified by God himſelf. (Firſt) that 'tis a point of the higheſt wiſdome the ſons of men are capable of, ſeriouſly to conſider their latter end: that is to prepare for death, to ſet all things right in the matters of their ſouls, ſo as that things may iſſue well with them at laſt, and they may go off the ſtage of this world with comfort. (Secondly) that not to do this is a point of the greateſt folly: it doth evidently argue men to be

be void of counſell, and all true underſtanding: it would have been their wiſdome to have conſidered their latter end; and their not doing of it argued them to be guilty of notorious folly: theſe things you may ſee, God himſelf atteſts and verifies here. And, my beloved, what greater folly can there be, then for a man to live in the neglect of that which is of ſo much weight and importance for him to minde, as this is? Surely the greater the concern is, the greater muſt our folly be in the neglect thereof: yet this is the folly, that the moſt of men are guilty of; they minde not their latter end, their dying hour; at leaſt not ſo, as to make a timely proviſion for it: God lets them live many years, and perhaps they rejoyce in them all; but they forget the dayes of darkneſs, which are many: they regard not the ſtate of their Souls, nor how things ſtand between God and them, in reference to another world: and O that this were not the folly of too many of us, who profeſs the belief of another life, a future ſtate: *we live, and enjoy good, but we put far from us the evil day*, as thoſe

are

are ſaid to do *Amos* 6. 3. God ſpares us time after time; but no proviſion do we make for a dying hour. O how many of us have never yet ſet any thing right in the matters of our Souls, any thing in order, againſt the time comes, when we are to go hence, and be no more; that have ſcarce ever had yet one ſerious thought of death, judgment, or eternity, nor made the leaſt title of proviſion for them? And what ſhall I ſay to ſuch? I would (if God ſaw good) awaken them out of their folly, and convince them of it: in order to which I would plead a little with them in five or ſix particulars.

1. Muſt we not all go hence; *Solomon* tells us, *there is a time to be born, and a time to die*, Eccl. 3. 2. And the one is as ſure, as the other: as ſure as we have had a time to be born, ſo ſure we ſhall have a time to dye: and the living know it: *the living know, that they ſhall dye*, (ſaith *Solomon*) *Eccl.* 9. 5. Indeed they may well know it: for not only the experience of between five and ſix thouſand years tells them ſo; but it is what is *appointed*, what is infallibly determined by the unchangable law, and de-

decree of Heaven, *Heb.* 9. 27. nor can any thing whatever exempt us from the ſtroak of Death.

1. Youthful ſtrength and vigour can't do it: for young men dye, as well as old; ſtrong men dye, as well as weak. *One dyeth in his full ſtrength,* (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt) *being wholly at eaſe and quiet; his breaſts are full of milk, and his bones are moiſtned with marrow.* Job 21. 23, 24.

2. Worldly pomp and greatneſs can't do it: For great men dye, as well as mean men; rich men dye, as well as poor men. *Where is the houſe of the Prince?* (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt) Anſwer is made, *he ſhall be brought to the Grave, and ſhall remain in the tomb, the clods of the valley ſhall be ſweet unto him, and every man ſhall draw after him, as there is innumerable before him,* Job 21. 28, 32, 33. So in the 49 *Pſal.* 16, 17, 18, 19. *Be not thou afraid, when one is made rich, when the glory of his houſe is increaſed: for when he dyeth, he ſhall carry nothing away, his glory ſhall not deſcend after him; though while he lived, he bleſſed his ſoul,* and the like; *he ſhall go to the generation of his fathers, he ſhall never ſee light.*

3. Hu-

5. Humane wiſdom and policy can't do it: for wiſe men die, as well as fools. So *Pſal.* 49. 10. *Wiſe men die, likewiſe the Fool*; yea in many reſpects *Wiſe men die as the Fool.* Eccl. 2. 16. Pray, what is become of all the wiſe men, and great Politicians that have lived in former ages? Truly the clods of the valley cover them.

4. Spiritual gifts and graces can't do it: For good men die, as well as bad; holy men, as well as wicked men: *The righteous man periſheth and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away*, Iſa. 57. 1

5. Eminency of place and ſervice can't do it. *Your Fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?* Zech. 1. 5. What higher place, than to be a Prophet, to be an Ambaſſadour for God? and yet ſuch die. Nothing (you ſee) can exempt us from deaths ſtrokes: why then ſhould we neglect to prepare for it? I will cloſe this Head with a ſaying I have read in one of the Ancients; *What among humane affairs*, ſaith he, *is more certain than death? what more uncertain than the hour of death? Death compaſſionates not poverty; it reverences not riches, or*

Quid in rebus humanis certius morte, quid horâ mortis incertius inveniturr? &c Bern.

greatneſs, it ſpares no Sex, no manners, no age: onely it ſeems to come in at the gate upon old men: but craftily it ſteals in upon young ones.

Tota vita nihil aliud eſt quam iter ad mortem. Cartw.

2. Does not death haſten upon us all? As we muſt all die, ſo death haſtens apace upon us: Every ſtep we take is a ſtep towards death and the grave: So we find Eccl. 9. 10. *Our whole life is* (as One well obſerves upon that place) *nothing elſe, but a journey towards death and the Grave*: whether we ſleep, or wake; eat, or drink; trade, or travel; pray, or play; we are ſtill haſtening to the grave: A dying hour haſtens upon us all, and how faſt (pray) does it haſten upon us? faſter then a Weavers ſhuttle does to the end to of the web: *My dayes* (ſaith *Job*) *are ſwifter than a Weavers ſhuttle*, *Job.* 7. 6. How faſt does it haſten upon us? as faſt as, yea faſter than a Poſt haſtens to the end of his ſtage, or a ſwift ſhip to the harbour, under the advantage of wind and tide: or the ſwift flying Eagle to the prey. *My dayes are ſwifter than a Poſt* (ſaith *Job*) *they flee away, they ſee no good: they are paſſed away, as the ſwift ſhips; as the Eagle haſteneth to the prey*, Job. 9. 25, 26.

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How faſt does it haſten upon us? *So* faſt as that for ought we know, it will be upon us, before we ſee the light of another day. *Thou fool, this night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee*, Lu. 12. 20. How faſt does it haſten upon us? So faſt, as that, for ought we know, it may be upon us the next hour, yea the next moment: *They ſpend their daies in mirth, and in a moment go down to the grave*, *Job.* 21 13. To be ſure; it will be upon us ſpeedily, and it may be upon us ſuddenly: I pray, conſider; what are we? and what is our life? wind, *Job.* 7. 7. *O remember, that my life is wind*; an hands-breadth Pſal. 39. 5. *Behold thou haſt made my dayes as an hands-breadth; mine age is as nothing before thee*: a declining ſhadow *Pſal.* 102 11. *My dayes are like a ſhadow that declineth, and I am withered like graſs*: a flower of the field which is withered, and gone with the wind: *As for man his dayes are as graſs, as a flower of the field, the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof knoweth it no more*, Pſal, 103. 15, 16. And again, *All fleſh is graſs, and the goodlineſs thereof as the flower of the field; the graſs withereth, the*

flower fadeth; becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: ſurely the people is graſs, Iſa. 40. 6, 7. Vanity and a ſhadow: *Man is like to vanity, his dayes are as a ſhadow, that paſſeth away*, Pſal. 144. 4. *A vapour which appeareth for a little ſeaſon, and is gone*, Jam. 4. 14. O how ſoon may one, or another; or all of us be among the dead? How ſoon may death approach us?

3. What infinite mercy is it, that God has ſpared us thus long, and ſtill does ſpare us to ſet all things right, to make all ready for a dying hour? O (my beloved) how great is the ſparing mercy of God towards us? we have had ſome ten, ſome twenty, ſome thirty, ſome forty, ſome fifty, ſome ſixty years in the world; and ſtill God ſpares us; ſtill he lets us live, and enjoy good: and why all this? (think you) ſurely to ſet things right in our ſouls, to make ready for a dying hour: and ſhall we yet neglect it? God forbid. O Sirs, think a little, *I beſeech you*, with your ſelves; how long ſince the grave might have ſwallowed us up, and the bottomleſs Pit have ſhut its mouth upon us: how long ſince might time and dayes have been at an

end

end with us; and our ſouls ſtated in a miſerable Eternity? But ſtill God ſpares us, and we are yet in the land of the living, with a door of mercy and grace yet open unto us; at leaſt a poſſibility left us of knowing the things of our peace in our day, of making proviſion for death and eternity: and O what mercy is this! *I* would feign a little quicken both you and my ſelf by this conſideration: and in order thereunto let me plead a little particularly with you.

1. Conſider, how long God hath ſpared, and does ſpare you, beyond what he does, and has thouſands, and ten thouſands of others: God does not ſpare all at that rate, which he has ſpared, and does ſtill ſpare us: Alas! How many thouſands are there now free among the dead, who came into being long ſince we did? their glaſs is run, their Sun is ſet, their day is over, their hopes and expectations are all at an end, their ſouls are ſtated in an eternal condition, a condition that will admit of neither change nor period for ever. And yet we are ſpared ſtill: they came into the world long after us, and are gone into eterni-

ty long before us: yea, how many are there, that never arrived to the one half of thoſe years, that we have arriv'd unto? their *Sun* has ſet in the morning: How many of us have out-liv'd our yoke-fellows, our children, our ſervants, our friends, and acquaintance? and yet we ſtand our ground: and all this that we might Prepare for a dying hour: *This patience of God ſhou d lead us to Repentance*, Rom. 2. 5. And O that it might ſo do!

2. Conſider, how much we have provoked God, and what advantage we have given him in juſtice againſt us: *I* would ſay here, as Chriſt ſpeaks in another caſe, Luke 13. begin. *Suppoſe ye, that thoſe Gallileans, whoſe blood* Pilate *mingled with their Sacrifices, were ſinners above all the Gallileans; becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh: or thoſe eighteen upon whom the Tower of* Siloah *fell, and ſlew them, think ye, they were ſinners above all the men that dwelt in* Jeruſalem? *I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* So ſay I here, ſuppoſe ye, that thoſe that are gone down to the gates of the grave and the

the bars of death, before us, were greater ſinners than we? I tell you nay; but except we repent, we muſt all likewiſe periſh: we have ſinned as well as they, and poſſibly in many regards, more than they: to be ſure, we have all over and over deſerved long ſince to have been covered with the ſhadow of the night of eternal darkneſs: O how has the patience of God been tried, and his long-ſufferings put to it by us? what a burthen have we been to his Soul? Some of us have cauſe to think, that we have been as great a burthen to God, as moſt that ever lived: How juſtly may the bleſſed God complain of many of us: *That we have made him to ſerve with our ſins, and wearied him with our iniquities*; as he did of them of old? Iſa. 43. 24. that *We have broke his heart with our whoriſh heart, whereby we have departed from him*, Ezek. 6. 9. that *Our ſins have preſſed him down, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves*, Amos 2. 13. Alas! Alas! how have we wallowed in our pollutions, and acted out the enmity and rebellon of our natures againſt him? how have we rejected his word, reſiſted his Spirit, deſpiſed his grace, trampled upon his Son,

refuſed many and many an offer of Love, and many a ſweet call, and bleſſed invitation, to come to the marriage-Supper of the Lamb? and yet that he ſhould ſtill ſpare us: O what merey is this! In the 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. we read that *The long-ſuffering of God waited in the dayes of* Noah, and truly, my beloved, it waits as much in our dayes, our provocations being as many, and as high againſt him, as theirs of that generation were. O Sirs, why are we not in hell? why are we not ſealed and ſhut up among the damned? why have we one call more, one offer more, one ſeaſon of grace more? verily 'tis all rich mercy: O that it might lead us to repentance.

3. Conſider; how ſad it had been with us, had the Lord taken that advantage againſt us, which we have over and over given him. Suppoſe (my beloved) God had not ſpared us; but had cut us off, as he might long ſince: what now had been become of us? and where now had we been? had you died of ſuch and ſuch a ſickneſs you have been in, when poſſibly a ſentence of death was paſſed upon you, both by your ſelves and others; and there was really but a

ſtep

ſtep between death and you: where and how miſerable had you now been? had you not been now in the flames, eternally ſeperated from God and Chriſt? being Godleſs and Chriſtleſs; have you not now cauſe to fear, you had been in as irrecoverable a condition, as the Devils themſelves are in, ſealed up under wrath and condemnation, paſt all hopes and poſſibility of mercy for ever? *Whither had I gone* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *if then* (ſpeaking of the time, that he was in his ſins) *I had gone hence? whither had I gone, but into the flames and into eternal torments, anſwerable to my ſins?* may not we ſay the like? but bleſſed be God, *It* is yet time and ſeaſon with me and you: we are ſpared to this hour, that we might provide for death and eternity. O *Sirs*, ſuppoſe, you or *I* were now among the damned; ſuppoſe we were, as they are, ſealed up under wrath, and ſeparated from God, left under an utter impoſſibility of ever ſeeing his face: how ſad then would our condition be? why, thus it might have been with us: O what mercy then is it, that God has ſpared us, and doth ſpare us, as he does? And how ſhould it awaken us to our work?

Quo irem, ſi tunc hinc abirem niſi in ignem & tormenta digna factis meis? Aug.

4. Con-

4. Conſider; how much more ſad it may, and will yet be with us, in caſe we provide not for a dying hour: Truely, the longer God ſpares us, if we anſwer not his end in his ſparing mercy; the more miſerable ſhall we be for ever. *It* will be ſad to periſh at all; but it will be doubly ſad to periſh under the long-ſuffering of God, under the abuſe of much goodneſs, and long patience. O to have many dayes, and many years patience and goodneſs come in to witneſs againſt a man at laſt: how ſad will this be? Think of, and ſeriouſly lay to heart that Scripture, *Rom.* 2. 4. 5. *Deſpiſeſt thou the Riches of his goodneſs and forbearance, and long-ſuffering; not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardneſs, and impenitent heart treaſureſt up to thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God:* Every day which God in his patience affords us, if we be not led to repentance, is a day of treaſuring up wrath, heaping up to our ſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, when wrath ſhall come upon us to the uttermoſt: well, think then, what a mercy it is, that God ſpares you,

as

as he does; and what an Obligation this ſparing mercy of his is upon you to ſet all things right in the matters of your ſouls againſt a dying hour comes.

4. Are you ſure, that thoſe helps and advantages, which now you injoy to further you in your work, will alwayes laſt and be injoyed by you; Suppoſe (my Beloved) that God ſhould yet ſpare you, and prolong your dayes in the land of the living: yet O how ſoon may all your helpes and advantages, to further you in this great work be withdrawn from you: Now bleſſed be God, you injoy many bleſſed helps and advantages for your furtherance in this great work: but how quickly may they all be gone?

1. How ſoon may the reproofes, the counſels, the holy examples, of your godly friends, Miniſters, and relations, be withdrawn from you? now you injoy the loving reproofes, the wholeſome counſels, the holy examples of ſuch and ſuch friends and relations: One reproves you for ſin: another quickens you to duty: One dehorts you from the world, and carnal pleaſure; another perſwades you to cloſe with Chriſt, and walk with God, to purſue after heaven,

ven, and eternal life; One woos and beſeeches you; another charges and commands you, to labour to know God, and to live to him, to provide for another life: and they all ſhew you the path of life, they tread the way to heaven in your ſight; all which are great helps and advantages, to further you in this great concern of yours: but how ſoon may all theſe be withdrawn? thy friends, thy miniſters, thy relations will ſpeedily be lodged in the duſt; and thou ſhalt never have a word of reproof, a word of counſel, a word of quickening, a word of encouragement, or a pattern of faith and holineſs ſet before thee by them any more for ever: which would be a dreadful thing: Now thy godly father, mother, yokefellow maſter, friend, and acquaintance is plying thee with counſels and inſtructions, for the good of thy Soul: to morrow it may be, he or ſhe goes down to the gates of the grave: and then no more of this for ever.

2. How ſoon may the Word and Ordinances of God, which you now injoy, be withdrawn from you? now you injoy the Word and Ordinances of God, you go from Ordinance to Ordinance:

you

you have *line upon line, precept upon precept*, as it is *Iſa.* 28. 10. Yea let me tell you, *you ſee and hear thoſe things, which many Prophets and righteous men have deſired to ſee, and hear; but ſaw, and heard them not*, Matth. 13. 16. O how is *Light and Immortality brought to light* to you? how is the way of Salvation made plain and manifeſt before you? what glorious diſcoveries, what bleſſed revelations, what ſweet and frequent tenders of Chriſt are made to you? how freely are you *called to the marriage-Supper of the Lamb?* How lovingly does Chriſt invite you to himſelf? how kindly does he ſtand knocking at the door of your ſouls? O (my Beloved) I may now ſay to you, as *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Behold! now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation.* O what helps and advantages are theſe? but how ſoon may they all be gone? how ſoon may the word of God be withdrawn? how ſoon may your light be put out, and your ſouls left in darkneſs, not knowing whither to go? remember that word of Chriſt, and lay it to heart; John 12. 35. *Yet a little while is the light with you, walk while ye have*

the

the light; leaſt darkneſs come upon you; and he that walketh in darkneſs knoweth not whither he goeth. While you have the light, believing in the light, that you may be the Children of the light. It is a great Queſtion, whether we may not loſe Goſpel ordinances and all; and where are we then?

3. How ſoon may the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit of God be withdrawn from you? now you have the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit of God in you, and with you: he *moves upon the face of the waters* in your Souls: he moves and ſtrives in and by the Word, and Ordinances; Mercies, and afflictions: now you have inlightening, and then you have quickening influences from him: now he ſhews you your work; and then he tenders you his aſſiſtance: now he diſcovers the odiouſneſs of ſin to you; and then he diſplays the beauty, ſweetneſs, and excellency of Chriſt and holineſs before you: but alas! how ſoon may all this be at an end? think of that terrible word, Gen. 6. 3. *My Spirit ſhall no more ſtrive with man.* God may poſſibly the next day, yea the next hour, ſay to his Spirit concerning one or another of us; let him alone; ſtrive no more with him;

him; move no more in him; convince him no more; perſwade him no more; draw and allure him no more: he is addicted to his luſts, and to this world, let him alone: he has no mind to heaven, no deſire to make any proviſion for another world, let him alone; he is unwilling to ſee beyond time to eternity; he is given to his carnal pleaſures; let him alone: he has a reſiſting, gain-ſaying Spirit; let him alone. O how ſoon theſe, and all other helps and advantages, you now injoy, may be withdrawn, who knows? You have all theſe together in one Scripture, which *I* deſire you to lay to heart; Luke 19.41,42. *when he was come near, he beheld the City* (ſpeaking of *Jeruſalem*) *and wept over it, ſaying, if thou hadſt known, even thou at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.* They had had a day; they did injoy the things of their peace; they might and ſhould hove improved their day, and the things of their peace, by ſecuring their eternal ſtate: but they neglected it, and now all theſe are withdrawn from them; which cauſed the Lord of glory, the joy of the whole Earth to weep

over

over them: ſo woful, miſerable, and deplorable he ſaw their condition to be: And how ſad will it be with you, if once Chriſt ſhould come to ſay over you that diſmal word, *now they are hid from your eyes*?

5. *Is* it an eaſie matter (think you) to ſet things right in your ſouls, and to make all things ready for a dying hour? Suppoſe (my Beloved) that you ſhould live yet many dayes, and with all your helps and advantages for the good of your Souls ſhould be continued to you: yet is it an eaſie work, which you have to do? and ſhall you have time and days to ſpare? Believe it, Sirs, all will be little enough to ſet things right, to make things ready for a dying hour. Pray, conſider with me theſe few things, as to this.

1. Conſider in what a woful diſorder all things are at preſent with you, and how utterly unready for a dying hour. *I* will give you the Scripture-ſtate of your caſe. You are *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*; under whole loads and mountains of ſcarlet, crimſon guilt; *without Chriſt*, *without hope*, *without God in the world*: *alienated and enemies in your mindes*

minds by wicked works: yea enmity it ſelf againſt God and Chriſt: full of ſin both within and without, and nothing but ſin; having no good dwelling in you: void of all grace, all true ſpiritual life: under the power and predominancy of luſt; *ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, and carried Captive by the Devil at his will:* Cloſely glued to, and deeply in love with this world: Ignorant of God, and of the great myſtery of the Father, and of Chriſt; at leaſt having no ſaving knowledge of them: No ſavour of heaven, no reliſh of ſpiritual things in your ſouls: Wallowing in your blood and gore: being *filthy, and abominable; to every good work reprobate:* the heart ſtrongly averſe from God, and all good; and vigorouſly bent to ſin and vanity: Nothing of heaven within; but full of hell; full of the ſpirit, and image of the devil: Under the law of ſin: Strangers to the law of grace: No union with Chriſt: no oyl in the veſſel: *poor, miſerable, blind, and naked*; at moſt *having but the form, and denying the power of godlineſs.* This is your condition: O what diſorders are theſe? and

what an unready poſture are you in for Death and Eternity?

2 Conſider how great a thing it is to be ready for death, ready indeed, and to have all things ſet right, and in order, againſt a dying hour comes; and how much is requiſite in order thereunto. 'Tis a great ſaying of an holy man: *No one* (ſaith he) *can joyfully welcome death, but he that has been long compoſing his ſpirit, and making ready for it.* O (my beloved) to be indeed ready to quit the world, to go into the Divine Preſence, the great, the holy, glorious preſence of God; to be ready to enter upon the Beatifical Viſion, to poſſeſs a Manſion in the Fathers Houſe, to joyn with an heavenly Hoſt of Angels, and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, in eternal praiſing, admiring, and adoring of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: believe it, this is a great thing, and great things are requiſite thereunto: This calls for a near union with Chriſt, a firm peace with God, clear Evidences for heaven; for much grace and holineſs, much heavenlineſs and ſpirituality of mind, much weanedneſs from this world, much holy deadneſs to

Mortem venientem nemo hilaris accipit, niſi qui ſe diu ad illam compoſuit. Gher.

to ſin, ſelf, and the Creature, much victory over corruption, much ſoul-cleanſing, much puiity of heart and affections, much diligence and faithfulneſs in duties: And (my beloved) are theſe little things, or things eaſie to be accompliſht and attained unto? O Sirs! the Scripture ſpeaking of theſe things, calls upon us *to ſtrive*, *Lu.* 13. 24. *to give all diligence* in the purſuit of them, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 10. to manage and diſpatch them *with fear and trembling*, *Phil.* 2. 12. All which tells us, that they are great things, and not eaſily to be accompliſht and attained unto: Therefore we had need look after this, and neglect no longer.

3 Conſider what lets and hinderances, difficulties and oppoſitions you muſt expect to meet withal in your minding and managing this work: Not only is the work it ſelf great; but you muſt alſo expect many lets and hind'rances, much difficulty and oppoſition in the managing of it: you muſt expect lets and oppoſitions from the Devil; he is the Enemy of Souls, and you muſt expect, that he will make uſe of all his wiles, methods, and devices,

all his craft and cunning, all his artifices; and that he will ſtir up all his wrath and malice againſt you: he is your Enemy, and he is a ſubtil Enemy, a potent Enemy, an indefatigable Enemy, an Enemy *that always goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 *Pet.* 5.8. You muſt expect lets and oppoſitions from the world too; from the men of the world, from the things of the world, from the ſmiles of the world, from the frowns of the world. The world is your Enemy, as well as the Devil: So much is intimated, 1 *Jo.* 5. 4. and you muſt expect oppoſition from it. The men of the world will diſcourage you; the things of the world will divert you; the troubles of the world will mightily depreſs you; the enjoyments of the world will miſerably inſnare and intangle you: The world is of a marvellouſly bewitching, inſnaring, and intangling nature: it is indeed oppoſite to God, and all goodneſs; and ſo to the whole intereſt of our ſouls. *The friendſhip of the world is enmity to God*, *Jam.* 1. 4. The world will plead for, and take up your time, your ſtrength, your thoughts. O the hinde-

hinderance that the world is to thouſands and ten thouſands in the work of their ſouls; truly this ruines multitudes for ever: This ruin'd him we read of *Mat.* 19. 22. And ſaith *Paul*, Demas *hath forſaken us, having imbraced this preſent world*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10.

You muſt expect lets and hinderances alſo from your own hearts, yea from them above all others: *The heart* (the Holy Ghoſt tells us) *is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked*, *Jer.* 17. 9. And who of us that does at all obſerve it, and the workings of it, does not find it to be ſo? Now it will openly oppoſe you; then it will ſecretly ſeduce and inſnare you: Now it will carry you off, and draw you back from God and duty, *Heb.* 3. 12. then it will turn you aſide to ſin and vanity, *Iſa.* 44. 20. Now it will divert you from duty; then it will make you dead and ſlothful in duty: 'tis indeed wholly ſet againſt all that is good; and it has a thouſand ways to hinder you in your great work; and you muſt expect, that it will do its utmoſt to hinder you: This is a coſe Enemy; it is always at hand; there is no end of

its oppoſition, till life it ſelf ends. One of the Ancients (I remember) breaks out into a ſad exclamation againſt his own heart thus: *My heart* (ſaith he) *is a wicked heart, a vain heart, a roving, a wandering heart: my mind is exceeding light, wonderful unconſtant, a vagabond, and a fugitive; it changes it ſelf into all ſhapes, it will, and it will not: 'tis, like a leaf, moved and carried about with the wind: my vain and importunate heart hales me, now to the Market, and then to ſtrifes and brawlings; now to feaſting, and then to impure luſts; now the fleſh is inflamed with ſordid titallations, then the mind is defiled with filthy cogitations.* And who of us may not make the ſame complaint? yet ſuch is the enmity and oppoſition of our own hearts againſt heaven, and the things of heaven, that many times when we moſt reſolve, and ſet our ſelves to follow God, and to purſue the work of our ſouls, then they ſet us moſt back. It was a great ſpeech of that ſame Father: *This* (ſays he) *is my daily exerciſe, with my whole ſtrength I bend to thee, and would mount up to God and heaven; but by how much the more ſtrongly*

Cor meum cor pravum, vanum, vagum: mens mea valdè levis, multumq; inſtabilis, vaga & profuga, ubiq; ſe variat, vult, & non vult, &c. Bern.

Hæc eſt animæ meæ aſſidua exercitatio, hinc aſſiduè ſcopo ſpiritum meum, &c. Bern. *de amore Dei.*

ſtrongly I endeavour to come up to thee, by ſo much the more powerfully I am caſt into the earth, into my ſelf, and even under my ſelf, captivated to my luſts. And ſo 'tis often with us: Lets then and oppoſitions muſt be expected by us on all hands; and we had need therefore the more to awaken to our work. 'Tis true, if you will ingage in good earneſt in the work of your ſouls, your helps and incouragements will be greater, then your lets and diſcouragements; you will have more with you, then againſt you: you will have God with you, and Chriſt with you, and the Comforter with you, and all the Graces of the Covenant with you; be incouraged therefore to ſet upon Soul-work Now lay all theſe things together, and ſee if it be an eaſie matter to make ready for a dying hour; and if it be not, why ſhould we neglect? why ſhould we delay any longer?

6 How terrible will death be to you? and what a dreadful change will it make with you, in caſe you ſtill neglect to make ready for it? Suppoſe (my beloved) you go on in the neglect of this great concern, *putting far from*

you the evil day; what (think you) will the iſſue of it be? will not death be moſt terrible to you, when you ſhall be called to conflict with it? will it not make a dreadful change with you? ſurely it will. Death to an unready ſoul, what will it be? it will be the period of all his mercies, of all his comforts, of all his hopes: For ſuch an one receives all his good things in this life, before death comes, *Lu.* 16. 25. It will be the ſending of him to his own place; the cutting him down as fewel for everlaſting burnings: It will be (as a worthy Divine ſpeaks) *the taking up of the Draw-bridge, and the pulling up of the Flood-gates of Gods eternal wrath, to let in the deluge of it upon his ſoul for ever:* It will be a change to him; but what change will it be? ſurely a very ſad one.

1 A change from Earth to Hell: And is not this a ſad change? *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all that forget God, Pſa.* 9. 17. And we read of *the rich man* (who was unready for death) *that being dead, he was in hell, Lu.* 22. 23.

2 A change from Light to Darkneſs:

neſs: And is not that a ſad change? The Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking of ſuch an one, tells us; *God ſhall drive him out of light into darkneſs, and chaſe him out of the world, Job* 18. 18. Here wicked men enjoy the light of Creature-comforts, but God will drive them out of theſe, into the darkneſs of eternal miſery, into *utter darkneſs, Mat.* 25. 30. into *blackneſs of darkneſs, Jude* 13.

3 A change from pleaſure to pain, from delight to torment: a ſad change it is, from pleaſure and delight in ſin, to pain and torment for ſin, *Lu.* 16. 23. Here the ſoul ſports himſelf in the pleaſures and delights of ſin, and he thinks he can never have enough; but then there will be an end of all thoſe pleaſures and delights, and nothing but pain, and torment, and vexation will ſucceed them.

4 A change from the Offers of Grace to the Revelations of Wrath: *Shall thy loving kindneſs be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulneſs in deſtruction* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) in that 88 *Pſa.* 11. True in the 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. we read of *Chriſts preaching by his Spirit to the Spirits in priſon*, that is, to Souls in Hell:

Hell: But mark, when was it that he preached to them? not when in priſon, but in the *days of Noah*, when they lived in the world. There is never an offer of grace and love made to ſouls in the grave: while life laſts, the ſoul hears the joyful ſound: And O the ſweet offers, the gracious tenders, the loving invitations, that are made to him of Chriſt, of Grace, of Eternal Life and Love! O the wooings, the meltings, the entreatings, the allurings of Divine Love to and over the ſoul! but when death comes, farewel all theſe, farewel all the ſweet offers of Chriſt, and all the bleſſed motions of the Spirit; then there's nothing but wrath revealed, and wrath ſhall come on the neglecting ſoul to the uttermoſt.

5 A change from fair probabilities to utter impoſſibilities of life and ſalvation; a ſad change ſtill: *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation*; now, and not hereafter, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. Now there is a fair probability for the worſt of ſinners to be ſaved, if they will look after Salvation, and mind their Eternal Concerns; Chriſt is both able and willing to ſave: to ſave was the

the end of his coming into the world, and of all he did, and ſuffer'd here, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. Now they are beſought and entreated to be reconciled to God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20. but when death comes, that changes theſe fair probabilities into utter impoſſibilities of life and ſalvation: Therefore mark, *Now* (ſays the Apoſtle) *is the day of ſalvation*; that is, now while life laſts, and while the Goſpel is preached.

6 A change from hope to deſpair: a ſad change indeed. We read, that *the hopes of the Hypocrite ſhall periſh*, *Job* 8. 13. and that *the expectation of the wicked ſhall periſh*, *Pro.* 10. 28. Whether men be open ſinners, or cloſe hypocrites, their hopes at laſt ſhall all fail, and turn into deſpair, deſpair of ever ſeeing God, or enjoying the leaſt tittle or *Iota* of good for ever.

Thus death will be terrible to you, and make a dreadful change with you, in caſe you neglect to make ready for its coming; 'twill affright you as bad as the hand-writing upon the wall did that proud King, *Dan.* 5. 5, 6. *which made his countenance change, his thoughts to trouble him, and the joynts of his loyns to*

to be looſed, and his knees to ſmite one againſt another. O when death comes, and thou ſhalt be found unready, how will thy countenance change, thy joynts be looſed, thy thoughts troubled, and thy heart tremble within thee? In a word, I would ſay to you as the Prophet ſpake of old, *Iſa.* 10. 3. *What will you do in the day of viſitation, and whether will you flee for help?* When death comes, what will you do? which way will you look? will there be any hope, any help, any refuge for your ſouls to flee unto? Alas! there will be none. Wilt thou then run to the mercies of God, and cry Lord, Lord? Alas! it will be in vain: he will then ſay unto you, *Depart from me, I know you not, Mat.* 25. 11, 12. Wilt thou then labour to get grace and pardon? alas! it will be too late; then the *door will be ſhut* againſt thee, *Mat* 25. 10. Wilt thou then deſire others to ſpare thee ſome of their Oyl? alas! that will be a vain thing; they will tell thee, they have but enough for themſelves, *Mat.* 25. 9. Wilt thou then plead thy gifts, parts, and ſervices for Chriſt? alas! it will be to no purpoſe, unleſs thou haſt done

done the main work, notwithſtanding all thy gifts and ſervices, he will ſend thee away with the workers of iniquity, *Mat.* 7. 22, 13. Wilt thou call upon the Rocks and Mountains to cover thee, and hide thee from the wrath of him that ſits upon the Throne? alas! it will be in vain, *Rev.* 6. *latter end.* O ſinners, when thou ſhalt ſee thy ſelf launching out into the great Ocean of Eternity, and God ſhall, as it were, ſay to thee by the mouth of thy own Conſcience; Well now, time and days are at an end with you, and will never dawn more, what haſt thou done for thy ſoul? what proviſion haſt thou made for another world? Is Chriſt thine? haſt thou gotten thy ſins pardoned? and the like. When it ſhall be thus (I ſay) what wilt thou then do? and whether wilt thou then look? how wilt thou then cry out, undone, undone, I am loſt for ever, my day is ended, and my work is ſtill to do? woe is me! what a God, a Chriſt, a Heaven, a Bleſſedneſs, a Glory, have I wilfully and fooliſhly loſt? Truly thou, and ſuch as thou, are the only perſons whoſe death will be truly lamentable. I remember

member a ſaying I have read in one of the Ancients: *They* (ſaith he) *are to be bewailed in their death, whom the Devils drag away to the torments of the Infernal Pit, not they whom the holy Angels do conduct to the joys of Paradiſe; they are to be bewailed, who after death are by the Devils turned into Hell, and not they, who by the Augels are placed or ſet down in heaven.* O that theſe things might convince you of your folly, and awaken your ſouls; and that ſo, as yet to know the things of your peace in your day, and the time of your viſitation.

Illi plorandi ſunt in morte quos dæmones pertrahunt ad pœnas inferni, non illi quos Angeli perducunt ad gaudia Paradiſi: &c. Bern. *de modo benè vivendi.*

CHAP. VI.

Being a Call to all good and bad: Saints and Sinners, to addreſs themſelves to the great work of making all ready for a dying hour.

WHat is the language of all this? Verily it calls aloud upon us all, good and bad: Saints and Sinners, to make it our great buſineſs to ſet all things right in the matters of our ſouls, and

and make all ready for a dying hour: And O that we would make this improvement of this great truth, and of Gods ſparing goodneſs to us! he ſpares us; and why does he ſpare us, but that we ſhould ſet all things right, and make all things ready? O that we would now fall in with the end and deſign of God herein, making it our great care and buſineſs in time to provide for Eternity, in life to make ready for death. Some of you, I verily believe, are about this work, and the Lord proſper you in it: You know you were born for Eternity, and you do endeavour to live for Eternity; your great work in time is to make proviſion for a bleſſed Eternity: O happy ſouls that you are! Others of us, and thoſe, by far, the moſt (I fear) are utterly negligent in this buſineſs; death and Eternity are little minded by us, but we are in a ſleepy, drowſie, ſecure ſpirit: and to ſuch (methinks) this truth ſpeaks in a language much like to that of the Ship-maſter to *Jonah*, *Jon.* 1. 6. *What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? Ariſe, and call upon thy God, if ſo be he will think on us, that we periſh not.* So what mean you,

you, O you ſleepy, drowſie, ſecure ſouls? ariſe, make ready for a dying hour; ſet all things right, all things in order in your ſpiritual concernments, leaſt death come upon you at unawares, and you be loſt for ever: And to ſuch of us I would ſay, as ſometimes God did by the Prophet to *Hezekiah*, *Iſa.* 38. 1. *Set thine houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die, and not live.* So ſay I to you, ſet your hearts in order, your ſpiritual concerns in order, make all even between God and you, for you ſhall ſhortly die, and not live; you ſhall ſhortly go hence, and be no more: And why ſhould we not all do ſo? If you be to change your condition in the world, how careful and ſolicitous are you to have all things ready, and in order for that change? Why (my beloved) you are ſhortly to paſs under that great and laſt Change, a change from Time to Eternity; and will you have no care, no ſolicitude, to make ready for that change? If you are to take a journey, though but a few miles, or to make a Voyage into a ſtrange Land, O how are you concerned to have all things ready, all things in a prepared poſture, in order there-

thereunto? And (my beloved) ſhould not you be more concerned to make ready for your great journey, your laſt and great voyage? You are making a journey, a voyage out of time into Eternity; you are juſt launching forth into the great Ocean: And what nothing in order, nothing ready, nothing ſet right in order thereunto? That is ſtrange. If you have ſome great buſineſs, a buſineſs of more then ordinary importance to be done, or a Suit at Law to be tryed and determin'd, O how cloſe do you follow it? and how careful are you to have all things ready in order thereunto? And (my beloved) ſhould you not be as careful, and diligent to prepare, and ſet all things right for the great buſineſs of your ſouls in another world? have you any buſineſs, any concern of greater importance to you, then the concern of your Souls, and Eternity? If you are to appear before ſome Earthly Judge, eſpecially if it be about a matter that concerns your life; O how thoughtful are you, to have all things ready, and in order, in reference thereunto? And (my beloved) ſhould not you be as thoughtful

and ſolicitous to make all ready, and to ſet all right in order to your appearing before the Judge of all the Earth; and that about a matter which concerns the life of your Souls, about a matter of eternal life or death? Well what ſhall *I* ſay? will you ſet about this great buſineſs, this great concern? or is it all one with you, whether you live, or dye; are ſaved, or damned to Eternity? God yet ſpares you, bleſſed be his name: will you now ſet all right; before you go hence, and be no more? Sinners, will you ſet about this great buſineſs? your work is wholly yet to do, though, it may be, your day is far ſpent: your glaſs is almoſt run, your Sun near ſetting, and all your work to do. Oh *'tis high time for you to awake out of ſleep*; unleſs you mean to ſleep the ſleep of eternal death. Saints, will you ſet about this great buſineſs, while God ſpares you? You have done ſomewhat; but there is much more yet to be done: there is much out of order yet in your Souls: Grace weak (it may be) corruption ſtrong; peace broken; evidences blurr'd and blotted; unbelief powerfull within you;

you; the heart much eſtranged from God; little ſuitableneſs to Heaven in your Spirits; and the like: will you now labour to *recover ſtrength?* how many of us may complain, as that holy man once did? *I am aſhamed to live; becauſe I am ſo unprofitable: and I am affraid to dye; becauſe I am ſo unprepared.* Surely this truth concerns the beſt of us all: And if we underſtand our ſelves, we cannot but know it: the Lord help us to know it effectually. And if after all you would indeed addreſs to this great work and buſineſs: then I have ſeveral great and weighty directions to propound to you for your help therein: of which ſome more general, ſome more particular; and *I* would ſpeak of each diſtinctly.

Vivere erubeſco quia parum proficio, morſtimeo, quoniam non ſum paratus. Bern. de nteriori domo.

CHAP. VII.

Wherein are propounded ſeveral general directions in order to a through preparation of Soul for a dying hour.

1 WOuld you indeed ſet all things right in your Souls, make all ready for a dying hour? then in your moſt proſperous and flouriſhing ſtate here maintain a frequent and ſerious remembrance of death and the grave upon your Spirits. *If a man live many years* (ſaith *Solomon*) *and rejoyce in them all; yet let him remember the dayes of darkneſs: for they are many.* Eccl. 11. 8. By the dayes of darkneſs here we are to underſtand death, and the ſtate of death, the abode of our bodies in the grave, which is *a land of darkneſs, and where the light is as darkneſs,* Job 10. 22. Now, ſaith he, though a man live many years, and rejoyce in them all: that is, *though a man live long, and proſperouſly, long and joyfully*; yet let him remember death, and the grave; the future ſtate: 'tis true, there are other dayes of darkneſs, which we

Etſi diu quis vivat & lætus. Mer. in loc.

are

are ſubject to in this world, and ſhould be remembred by us; dayes of outward darkneſs, the darkneſs of outward trouble and affliction: and dayes of inward darkneſs, the darkneſs of ſpiritual diſtreſs and derilict̃ion: and indeed 'tis of marvellous uſe to us in our proſperity to remember theſe dayes of darkneſs: but eſpecially we ſhould remember death and the grave: we ſhould carry a lively remembrance of theſe dayes of darkneſs daily upon us: and indeed our not remembring theſe dayes of darkneſs is one great cauſe, why we are ſo unready for death and the grave, as we are. When we are in the midſt of our enjoyments, and the ſtreams run pleaſantly about us, we are too apt to forget theſe dayes of darkneſs: we are ſo taken with our earthly comforts, that we are loth to think of death and Eternity, *putting far from us the evil day*, as thoſe in their enjoyments did, *Amos* 6. 3. and therefore, when theſe dayes come, they find us ſo unready, and our ſpiritual concernments ſo diſcompoſed, as uſually they do. But (my beloved) as ever you would have all right, and in order in

your Souls, against a dying hour comes, let me recommend this to you, as one ſpecial help, maintain a deep and frequent remembrance of death and the grave upon your Spirits; remember the dayes of darkneſs; and that eſpecially theſe two ways.

1 Remember them ſo, as to have them much in your meditation: be much and frequent in the contemplation of death and the grave: This the Holy Ghoſt calls a *conſidering our latter end*; and withall mentions it, as a buſineſs of great importance to us, *Deut.* 32. 29. To conſider, is to revolve a thing in our minds, and to keep it much in our thoughts and meditations: And thus we ſhould conſider our latter end, and remember the dayes of darkneſs: this is that the Saints of old have been much converſant in; they were much and frequent in the thoughts and meditations of death: as I might inſtance in the good old Patriarchs, *Job*, *David*, and others: And 'tis what does marvelouſly conduce to our preparation for it. *The meditation of death* (ſaith one) *is life*: it is that which greatly promotes our ſpiritual life: therefore walk

Mortis meditatio vitæ eſt. Cerh.

walk much among the tombs, and converſe much and frequently with the thoughts of a dying hour.

2. Remember them ſo, as to have them daily in your expectation. In the midſt of all your enjoyments expect deaths approach daily: this is called *a waiting for our change. All the dayes of my appointed time, will I wait, till my change comes*, Job 14. 14. and we are commanded *to wait for the coming of our Lord*, as that which lies in the directeſt tendency to the exacteſt readineſs and preparation for his coming, *Luk.* 12. 36. *Expect death every hour*, (ſaith one) *for 'tis every hour approaching thee: In the morning, when thou riſeſt, think with thy ſelf, this may be the laſt day: in the evening, when thou lyeſt down think with thy ſelf, this may be the laſt night I may ever have in this world; I know not, when my Lord will come, whether in the morning, or in the evening, at midnight, or at the Cock-crowing: therefore I will be always expecting his coming.* Woe, and alas for us! we are apt to talk of many years yet to come, as he did *Luk.* 12. 9. whereas we ſhould live in the expecta-

tion of death every moment. Thus let us conſider the dayes of darkneſs it will marvelouſly conduce to the preparation of the Soul for them: the meditation and expectation of death will conduce much (among others) to theſe four things.

Agnoſcat homo ſe eſſe mortalem & franget elationem. Aug. *Cogita putredinem mortem tuam conſequentem & facilè humiliabis carnem tuam ſuperbientem.* Gerh.

1. It will conduce much to our humbling and ſelf-abaſing: *let a man own himſelf to be mortal* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *and pride will, it muſt down*: and *think frequently of death*, (ſaith another) *and thou wilt eaſily bring down thy proud heart*: hence alſo the conſideration of death is often in Scripture mentioned by the Holy Ghoſt, as an argument to make us humble. *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return*, Gen. 3. 19. as elſewhere.

2. It will conduce much to the weaning of our hearts from this world, and to the looſening of them from the things here below. *The time is ſhort*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *what then? why it remaineth, that they that have wives, be as though they had none; and thoſe that weep, as though they wept not; and thoſe that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not; thoſe that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not;*

not; and they that uſe this world, as not abuſing it: for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. He mentions the ſhortneſs of time, as that, the meditation and expectation whereof, has the directeſt tendency in it to wean and looſen the heart from all things here below. And indeed (as one of the Antients hath it) *he eaſily contemns all things here, who looks upon himſelf, as dying daily.*

Facilè contemnit omnia qui ſe quotidiè moriturum æſtimat. Bern. de modo benè vivendi

3. It will conduce much to the engaging the heart to Heaven, and the things of Heaven, to a ſerious purſuit of a bleſſed Eternity. So we find *Heb.* 11. 13, &c. *thoſe all dyed in the faith* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *not having received the promiſes; but having ſeen them a far off, and were perſwaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed, that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth*: that is, they were apprehenſive they had but a little time to ſtay here: and what then? *they deſire a better Country, that is an Heavenly*: the apprehenſion they had of their departure hence, quickned them unto earneſt deſires and purſuits after the better Country, the Heavenly land: And indeed

deed one great reaſon why we breath no more, and preſs no more after Heaven, and a bleſſed Eternity, is; becauſe we ſo ſeldom remember theſe dayes of darkneſs.

4. It will conduce much to the quickning of the heart to duty, and to diligence, and faithfulneſs therein. Chriſt himſelf made uſe of it for this end. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work*, Jo. 9. 4. *Peter* alſo, that holy *Apoſtle*, made uſe of it to that end: *I will not be negligent* (ſaith he) to do ſo and ſo in the way of my duty; *as knowing that ſhortly I ſhall put off this tabernacle*, 2 Pet. 1. 12, 13, 14. the conſideration of the near approach of his death, quickned him to his work and duty: And the Scripture propounds it, as that which has a tendency to this thing: *whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might*, (ſaith *Solomon*) *for there is no work nor counſel in the grave, whither thou art going*, Eccl. 9. 10. he propounds the conſideration of our going to the grave, as a means to quicken us to our preſent work. By all which we

ſee

ſee, how much the ſerious remembrance of the dayes of darkneſs muſt needs contribute to our readineſs and preparedneſs for theſe dayes: therefore be much in this work. For my own part, I have hardly found any one thing more quickning and engaging upon my Spirit, then this. And Souls I would beg you as you would live for ever, think often of death.

2. Would you indeed ſet all things right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? then be not fond of long life here in this world; but rather covet to live, as much as poſſible, in a little time. I would ſpeak of each diſtinctly.

1. Be not fond of long life here in this world. A fond hope and deſire of long life here, is one of the greateſt enemies to a true preparation of Soul for our departure hence. For pray, obſerve, take a man that is fond of long life here, and all his thoughts and projects are for this world: he is wholly taken up about, and carried out after the concerns of time, ſcarce allowing himſelf one ſerious thought for death and Eternity: a ſad inſtance you have hereof

hereof in the Rich man, *Luk.* 12. 19. he reckoned upon many years, upon a long life here; and what are the things he is taken up about? verily the things of this world only, the increaſe of his Goods, and where to ſtore his Treaſures: Fond hopes, and deſires of long life here, will certainly produce great delays, if not utter neglects, in the great work and concern of your Souls and Eternity: As ever therefore you would have all right and well in the concerns of your Souls, when you come to dye; be not fond of long life here: but ſit as looſe in your thoughts, hopes, and deſires, both of this life, and all the enjoyments of it, as poſſibly you can. And indeed (my beloved) to reaſon it a little with you, why ſhould you be fond of long life here? why ſhould you covet a long ſtay in this world? I would only plead with you in two things as to this.

1. What is this world, and what have we here, that we ſhould here covet a long ſtay? is this world ſuch a ſweet, ſuch an amiable, ſuch a deſirable thing? it is an angry world, a frowning world, a dirty world, a bewitching,

witching, enſnaring world: 'tis a waſte howling wilderneſs, a ſtrange land, an houſe of bondage, a troubleſome, tempeſtuous Sea, an *Aceldama*, a field of blood: ſuch I am ſure 'tis oftentimes to the poor Saints and people of God: And what have we here? why here we have *fears within, and fightings without, troubles on every ſide*, and from all hands, from friends, from enemies, from men, from devils: here we have ſorrows, ſnares, loſſes, wounds, deaths, dangers, temptations, ſeductions, diſappointments, *vexation of ſpirit*; and truly little elſe is to be expected by us here, except that which is worſe then all this, *viz.* daily riſings and ebolitions of luſt, violent eruptions of corruption, great aboundings of ſin and iniquity both in our ſelves and others, continual breakings with God, and departings from him, renewing and increaſing ſin and guilt daily. Indeed this world is full of ſin, and temptation to ſin. 'Tis (as *Auſtin* ſpeaks of it) *tota tentatio*, all temptation: and as it is all temptation, ſo 'tis little elſe but ſin: and why ſhould we covet a long ſtay here?

Why

Cur tantoperè vitam iſtam deſideramus in qua quantò ampius vivimus, tantò plus peccamus; quantò eſt vita longior, tantò culpæ numeratior. Bern. in medit. devot.

Why (ſaith one of the Antients) *ſhould we ſo much deſire that life, in which, by how much the longer we live, by ſo much the more we ſin; and the more numerous our dayes are, the more numerous will our ſins be?* who would deſire to ſtay long in a priſon, or a dungeon, in a ſtate and place of ſin and ſorrow? and ſuch is this world.

2. Is there not a better life, a better place, a better ſtate for our ſouls to long, and aſpire after? what do you think of the life above a whole eternity ſpent in the divine preſence, in the boſom of divine love, a life of love, a life of pleaſure, a life of joy, a life of admiration, a life of holineſs, perfect and unſpotted holineſs, a life every way correſpondent to the divine life, and the divine will? is not this a better life? *to be with Chriſt, is beſt of all, Phil.* 1. 23. To poſſeſs a manſion in our fathers houſe, prepared by our Lord and Head, Jeſus Chriſt for us: to live for ever in the viſion and fruition of Father, Son, and Spirit: to dwell in the heavenly City, where no unclean thing can enter: to joyn in with the glorious hoſt of Saints, and Angels above, and with them to ſpend a whole eternity in

ſongs

ſongs of praiſe and hallelujahs to God and the Lamb: to take up all our waters at the fountain-head; and indeed to dive and bath unchangably in the fountain of all delights at the fathers right hand: oh how ſweet is this life, and how much to be deſired by us? In a word (my beloved) the Saints, when in the beſt frame, have many of them been ſo far from being fond of Long life here, that indeed they have thought it long, till the time came, when they ſhould go hence, and be no more, crying out with an holy impatiency: *why is his chariot ſo long a coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?*

2. Covet to live much in a little time? Tis ſaid of that reverend and worthy Divine Dr. *Preſton*; that he deſired to, and accordingly did, live much in a little time: And our Lord himſelf (you know) did not live long in this world; but he lived much in a little time: he did much work in a few dayes for God and ſouls. And indeed (My beloved) 'tis not a long life, but a fruitful life, that is moſt amiable, moſt deſirable, and moſt like his life, who is life it ſelf. 'Tis not he that lives many years, but he that lives much

much in a few years, that is the moſt happy Soul. I know thoſe, whoſe ambition is not to live long but to live fruitfully; and to do as much, as poſſibly they can, in a little time: and might they have their option or choice, it would be this, to live much in a little time, and then have their diſmiſſion to reſt. And (my beloved) let this be your choice and your ambition: be caſting about in your ſelves, how you may live much in a little time; how you may compaſs much ſpiritual work and buſineſs in a few dayes: Labour to treaſure up much grace, much experience of God, and his love; to bring a large revenue of glory to him, and the like: And for this end poſſeſs your Souls with a deep ſenſe of the exceeding worth and preciouſneſs of time; and accordingly let your ſelves to redeem it, looking upon the loſs thereof to be the greateſt loſs in the world: *Eph.* 5. 16. we are commanded to *redeem the time*: And what is it to redeem the time, but to eſteem time as precious, as a thing of incomparable worth and value; and accordingly to make the beſt and higheſt improvement

of

of it for the honour of God, and good of our ſouls, that poſſibly we can? It is to fill up our time with duty, and our duties with grace: to make uſe of time for thoſe ends, for which time is given us: not to eat and drink, and ſolace our ſelves in the creature; but to ſerve and honour the Creator; to *work out our Salvation*; to get acquaintance with God and Chriſt, to make ſure of heaven and a bleſſed Eternity. O Sirs, look upon time as pretious: ſo indeed it is? time is the moſt weighty and momentous thing in the world: 'tis that which our eternal all depends upon: According as we do, or do not manage and improve our time well, ſo will it go with us for ever. 'Tis a ſweet meditation, which I have read in a diſcourſe of a holy Man: *This life* (ſaith he) *of ours is moſt ſwift; and yet in it eternal life is either gotten or loſt for ever: this life of ours is moſt miſerable; and yet in it eternal happineſs is either gotten or loſt for ever.* No leſs then a whole eternity of Happineſs, or miſery, ſalvation, or damnation depends upon our uſe and management of our little time here in this world.

Fugaciſſima eſt hæc vita noſtra & tamen in ea eterna vita aut acquiritur, aut amittitur, &c. Gerh.

As the tree falls ſo it lies, Eccleſ. 11. 3. As it is with us, when we go out of time, ſo it will be with us to all eternity: and this we ſhould be much in the thoughts of; accounting therefore the loſs of time, to be the greateſt loſs. 'Tis a weighty ſaying, which I have read in one of the Ancients: *It is a great and heavy loſs indeed* (ſaith he) *when we neither do good, nor think good* (and let me add nor get good) *but we ſuffer our hearts to wander abroad, about vain, and unprofitable things: and yet tis too too difficult to reſtrain or keep them back from theſe things.* Truely no loſs like the loſs of time: the loſs of eſtate, the loſs of Trade, the loſs of this or the other outward comfort is nothing to the loſs of time: theſe, being loſt, may be recovered again: but time being loſt, can never be recovered more: accordingly ſet your ſelves to redeem it, and do it, as much as poſſibly you can; accounting that day loſt, wherein you have not done ſomething for God, and your ſouls: the truth is we live no more, then we are converſant in the work of God and our ſouls; For, as for that which we call life, that is not ſpent in this work, it is not indeed to be accounted life. Third-

Gravis jactura eſt, cum nec bona facimus, nec bona cogitamus; ſed cor noſtrum per vana & inutilia ſinimus vagari: nimis tamen difficile eſt cor tenere, &c. Bern in med. devo.

Thirdly, would you indeed ſet all things right in your ſouls, make all ready for a dying hour? then think much, and often with your ſelves, how great a change, death will make with you, when ever it comes: death is a change, and in many reſpects, the greateſt change, which the Sons of men are to paſs through: *all the dayes of my appointed time, will I wait, till my change come,* Job. 14. 14. *Job* had many changes; and great changes; *Changes and war were upon him,* as he complains, *Job.* 10. 17 But no change like this of death; this was the great change, and this he waited for all his dayes: indeed, death is a great change to every man and woman; come when, and how it will: 'tis that (as you have heard) that deprives men of all their enjoyments here; which diſſolves the union between ſoul and body; which turns the body to duſt and putrifaction; and (which is unſpeakably more than this) it is that, through which the ſoul enters into the immediate preſence of God, and ſtates it in eternity; it is a change from time to eternity, from work to reward; a reward ſuitable to the work we have here

been doing, whether it be good, or evil; and is not this a great change? take a few hints in particular about it, to ſhew the greatneſs of it.

Firſt; it is ſuch a change, as all other changes upon the outward man, are but leading, and introductory unto, and into which at laſt, they all iſſue, and reſolve themſelves; we paſs through many changes here in this world; we may ſay, as *Job*, *Changes and war are upon us*; but theſe are but leading, and preliminary, as it were, to this laſt and great change; theſe all are, or ſhould be to us, Monitors of this laſt change; and do but a little darkly ſhadow it out unto us.

Secondly, *It* is ſuch a change, as calls for great Spiritual changes, to paſs upon us here, to fit, and prepare us for it; a change in our minds, a change in our wills, a change in our affections, a change in our converſations, a change in our whole man; a real change, a through change, an univerſal change; *Old things muſt be done away, and all things muſt become new*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. The mind muſt be changed from darkneſs to light, from ignorance to knowledge,

ledge, in ſpiritual things: The will muſt be changed from enmity to ſubjection, from rebellion to obedience to God and his Laws: the affections muſt be changed from earthlyneſs to heavenlyneſs, from carnality to ſpirituality; the Converſation muſt be changed from Sin to Holyneſs, from vanity and looſneſs, to ſtrictneſs and ſeriouſneſs, in walking with God; Oh how great muſt that change be, that calls for ſo many, and ſo great changes, to fit and prepare us for it?

Thirdly, It is ſuch a change, as, though it do not put us out of being, yet it puts us into a quite other manner of being, than ever we yet had; a change which ſets us naked before the Tribunal of God, to receive a definitive ſentence, of life or death from him; a change, which brings us into the immediate ſight of God, either as a gracious Father, or as a revenging judge; a change which fully opens the eyes of the ſoul; and makes him to ſee, both grace and ſin, heaven and hell; grace in its aimiableneſs, ſin in its odiouſneſs, Heaven in its glory, and Hell in its horrour: for (my Beloved) what ever we are, whether

good or bad, Saints or Sinners; yet when we die, our eyes will be fully opened, to ſee theſe things; we ſhall ſee unutterable things; if we be good, we ſhall ſee them with joy and exultation; if we be bad, we ſhall ſee them with anguiſh and confuſion of ſoul.

Fourthly, It is ſuch a change, as makes us capable of, and actually puts us into, unſpeakably greater things, either of happyneſs or miſery, comfort or confuſion, then ever here we knew, or were capable of; a change, which in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, carries the ſoul from ſmall firſt fruits to the ful vintage; from a few drops to a botttomleſs boundleſs Ocean of either Happyneſs or Vengeance, Delight or Torment. and withal there leaves him without any poſſibility of change or alteration for ever, but that, of its reunion with the body: for it is ſuch a change as leaves the ſtate of the ſoul for ever unchangeable: Oh then, think much and often with your ſelves, how great a change, death will make with you; certainly did men think, and conſider with them ſelves, how great a change death will

will make with them, when it comes, they would not leave the matters of their ſouls in ſuch diſorders and diſcompoſure, in ſuch an unready poſture for it, as they do.

Fourthly, Would you indeed ſet all right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? then, preſently ſet upon Soul-work, without admitting of the leaſt delay, or procraſtination upon any account whatſoever: delays, and procraſtinations in the work of our Souls and Eternity, is the high way to death and ruin: what was it, that ruined the fooliſh Virgins, but their delays in this great work, and their neglect of the great concerns of their ſouls, till it was too late to mind them? *Mat.* 25. *begin.* *Felix* alſo was in a fair way, and had a fair opportunity before him, to have provided for another world; but he delayed, and his delay (for ought we know) was his ruin, *Acts* 24. 25. Truly the heart is very apt to delay, and procraſtinate Soul-work: it is apt to cry out to morrow, to morrow; hence it is, that the Scripture calls ſo often upon us, for a ſpeedy engaging in the work of our ſouls; the Scripture ſaith *now*, and *to*

day; now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation, 2 Cor. 6. 2. and *to day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*, Heb. 3. 7, 8. and if the Scripture ſaith now, why ſhouldſt thou talk of hereafter? if the Scripture ſaith to day, why ſhouldſt thou talk of to morrow? *Auſtin* confeſſeth this, and withall tells us, there is ſcarce any end of delays; if once we give way to them: *I delayed* (ſaith he) *to be converted to God, and put off my living to him from day to day:* and elſewhere he tells us, that when God called upon him, to awake to his work, he returned nothing, but a few ſleepy words, *anon Lord*, (ſaith he) *anon, bear with me a little, but this anon and anon had no end; and this bear with me a little, went on a long way*: Take heed of this; this hath been the ruin of thouſands, and ten thouſands: how many have been convinced, that it is their duty, and intereſt both, to fall in with the work of God and their Souls, to make preparation for another world? but they have put it off till hereafter, and ſatisfied their Conſciences with reſolutions hereafter to do ſo, and ſo; and have thus loſt their ſeaſon:

Tardabam converti ad Dominum Deum & differebam de die in diem vivere in te. Aug. *Modò ecce modò, ſine paululum ſed modo & modo non habebant modum & ſine paululum in longum ibat.* Id

ſeaſon: Oh fall preſently, without delay, upon Soul-work: and to quicken you a little hereunto, conſider four things.

Firſt, Conſider the unreaſonableneſs of delays; no juſt plea can be made, nor true account given, why you ſhould delay your Soul-work one moment: the Devil, and a mans own heart will make many pleas; but no juſt plea can be made; they will tell you, it is too ſoon, you are young, and have time enough before you: what need you engage ſo ſoon? But is this a rational plea? is it too ſoon to be ſaved, too ſoon to be happy, too ſoon to ſecure your eternal intereſt? is it too ſoon to lay hold on eternal life? is it too ſoon to know, and enjoy God? is it too ſoon to be out of danger of periſhing eternally? why truly it cannot be too ſoon for theſe things: beſides, God calls for thy youth; *Remember thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth*, Eccl. 12. 1. and he greatly values the kindneſs of thy youth, *Jer.* 2. 2. Again, they will ſuggeſt, that ſuch and ſuch a buſineſs muſt be diſpatched, ſuch a work done and carried off your hands; and then you may attend this work:

Lord,

Lord, (ſaith he to Chriſt) *I will follow thee; but ſuffer me firſt to go bury my father*; and ſaith another, *Lord, I will follow thee; but firſt, let me go, and bid them farewell, which are at home*, Luk. 9. 57, 61. But friends, let me ask you, if there be any buſineſs to be diſpatched, like the buſineſs of your Souls, and Eternity? is there any thing upon your hand, that is of ſo much worth, as your ſouls, and of ſo much weight, as Eternity? is there any thing, you are ſo nearly concerned to mind, as that, which is indeed the one thing neceſſary, even the ſaving of your ſouls? Oh the whole world is nothing to this, and the greateſt concernments on earth, are but trifles to this concern. Again, they will tell you, it is an inconvenient ſeaſon, and hereafter the work may be better done, and minded by you, then now it can; which was *Felix* his caſe, in the place before mentioned, *Acts* 24. 25. But hearken ſoul, art thou ſure of another ſeaſon? and art thou ſure, that that will be a more convenient ſeaſon? ſurely no, if it be not convenient to day, thou mayſt fear, it will be leſs convenient to morrow; that Devil, and deceitfull heart

heart that tells thee it is not convenient now, will make proviſion, that it ſhall be leſs convenient hereafter; O therefore, break through all theſe pleas, and fall ſpeedily upon ſoul-work.

Secondly, Conſider the danger of delayes: delayes in this caſe are exceeding dangerous; one dayes, yea (for any thing I know) one hours delay herein, may prove thine eternal undoing; it may prove, the loſs of Chriſt, the loſs of heaven, the loſs of thy ſoul, and all for ever; Alas! Art thou ſure, thou ſhalt live one day, one hour more in this world: for ought thou knoweſt, the next moment, thou goeſt down into the grave *Job* 21. 13. But in caſe, thou ſhouldeſt live longer in the world, art thou ſure the Goſpel, and the means of Grace, ſhall be continued to thee? if thou ſhouldſt not be taken from the world, yet the Goſpel may be taken from thee; though the day of thy life may laſt a while longer; yet the day of Goſpel Grace and mercy may ſuddenly expire; and if that be once gone, all the tenders of Chriſt, all the offers of Grace, all the exhibitions of Life and Salvation are gone, if the Goſpel be once gone, thy ſeaſon is gone;

gone, and thy ſoul is gone, and thy ſalvation is gone, and that for ever; therefore, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *Now is the accepted time*, ſpeaking of the day of Goſpel-mercy, *Now is the day of Salvation*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. Or grant, thou ſhouldeſt live, and the Goſpel ſhould be continued to thee, as to the outward means; yet art thou ſure, that the day and ſeaſon of grace will laſt any longer, then this preſent moment? remember that ſad word which our Lord breathed out with tears in his eyes, over neglecting *Jeruſalem*, Luke 19. 42. *O that thou hadſt known, at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes*: alas! how ſoon may God withdraw his Spirit from thee? how ſoon may he call home his grieved Spirit from thy neglecting, reſiſting ſoul, once for all; ſaying, my Spirit ſhall ſtrive no more with that man? *Gen.* 6. 3. how ſoon may God ſeal thee up under judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of heart; ſo that thou ſhalt never be able to believe, or to do any thing for the good of thy ſoul in order to the other world? thou talkeſt of to morrow, and of hereafter; but who knows, but that before

to

to morrow, God may clap the ſeal of an hard heart, and a blind mind upon thee; ſo, as that, though thou ſhouldſt live a thouſand years, and withal enjoy the faireſt means, that ever any ſoul enjoyed; yet thou ſhouldeſt be never able to believe, to repent to do any thing for the working out of thy ſalvation? it is oftentimes his way of proceeding, with neglecting, delaying ones, *Iſa.* 6. 10. *John* 12. 39, 40. Or how ſoon may the Oath of God go forth againſt thee? thou talkeſt of to morrow; but alas! who knows but that before to morrow; *God may ſwear in his wrath, thou ſhalt not enter into his reſt*; it is what is threatned, againſt ſuch as will not hear his voice to day, but harden their hearts againſt him, *Heb.* 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. There is a time, when Gods Oath goeth forth, againſt ſuch and ſuch ſinners, for their contempt and neglect of Chriſt and Grace; a time, not only when God ſaith, but ſweareth, and that in wrath, that they ſhall never enter into his reſt, and if once Gods Oath is once gone out againſt a man, that man is paſt recovery: then farewel Chriſt, and heaven, and ſoul, and all for ever; O how dangerous are delayes! therefore take

take heed of them, and fall preſently upon ſoul-work.

Thirdly, conſider the diſadvantage of delayes! delayes herein are diſadvantagious, as well as dangerous; indeed were there no danger in them (I mean as to the eternal ſtate) yet the diſadvantage of them is ſo great, as, if rightly conſidered, might be enough to antidote the ſoul againſt them; and engage it preſently in the work which relates to another world. Pray conſider it a little: by delayes the ſoul loſeth much ſweet communion with Chriſt, and many a bleſſed communication of love from him, which he might enjoy: the ſooner we fall upon the work of heaven and eternity, the ſooner we come to a taſte and beginning of heaven, and a bleſſed eternity, in our ſouls, O the ſweet embraces, the bleſſed diſcoveries, the glorious incomes of love and delight that the ſoul loſes, by his delayes to get into Chriſt, and to walk with God, and to mind eternal concernments! Poor ſoul, by thy delayes, thou haſt lived upon huſks and ſwill, all thy dayes hitherto; whereas thou mighteſt have eaten bread in thy Fathers houſe, and drunk wine

new

new in thy Fathers kingdom: thou haſt lived on the muddy, dung, droſſie delights of ſin and the creature, whereas thou mighteſt have ſolaced and delighted thy ſoul with thoſe Chryſtal ſtreams of undefiled pleaſures, which are at Chriſts and the Fathers right hand. Beſides, by delayes the work of thy ſoul grows more difficult; hereby corruptions grow more ſtrong, and the heart grows more hard; by every dayes delay, the old enmity ſtrengthens it ſelf, and the ſoul is more, and more ſettled upon his lees; for accuſtomedneſs in ſining hardens the heart in ſin, as is hinted *Jer.* 13. 23. every day the Soul is more alienated from Chriſt, and hardened againſt him, at beſt, if thy ſoul doth at laſt come to ſee thy need of Chriſt, and deſireſt to cloſe with him, and to mind the work and concerns of another world; yet the longer thou delayeſt this buſineſs; the greater temptations thou wilt have to get over; for, though now thy heart ſaith it is too ſoon yet, after a few dayes delay, it will ſay it is too late; it will be apt to conclude, that now thy day is over, and now Chriſt will have nothing to do with thee

thee: Oh why ſhouldſt thou be ſuch an nemy to thy own ſoul, as to run it upon theſe diſadvantages? rather avoid them, by falling preſently upon Soul-work.

Fourthly, Conſider the ſinfulneſs of delays, and the horrible guilt they bring upon the ſoul: as delays are dangerous, and diſadvantagious; ſo they are ſinfull too, exceeding ſinfull, and provoking to the God of Heaven: the truth is, were there no danger in them, no diſadvantage by them to the ſoul; yet the ſinfulneſs of them is ſuch, as ſhould make us afraid of them: In every dayes delay to mind and purſue Soul-work; there is poſitive rebellion, and diſobedience to the will and command of God: for the command is, *to day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*, Heb. 3. 7, 8. by delaying therefore, thou rebelleſt againſt the command: in every dayes delay to mind and purſue Soul work, there is horrible unkindneſs and ingratitude to God and Chriſt; which ſurely is a black ſin, and brings great guilt upon the ſoul: God ſpares you time after time, when he might cut you off the next moment; and

and this he doth, that you may purſue the work of your Souls and Eternity: and Oh what unkindneſs, what ingratitude muſt it be in us to neglect, and put off this work? in every delay to mind and purſue Soul-work there is much contempt of Chriſt and Grace; and this is that, which makes it to be exceeding ſinfull: Chriſt offers himſelf, and his grace to you, he offers you life, he offers you peace, he offers you pardon, he offers you Righteouſneſs, he offers you ſtrength, he offers you all the treaſures of heaven; and withall calls upon you to accept theſe offers, and to take home theſe things to your ſelves; but you, by your delayes, powre contempt upon all; you in effect ſay, neither Chriſt, nor his grace, neither Chriſt nor the purchaſe of his blood, are worth minding, worth looking after; Oh what contempt is this? and what ſin is this? by delayes, you do in effect ſay, there is ſomething better then Chriſt, and ſomthing of greater concernment to you, then ſalvation by Chriſt; you plainly ſay, that indeed you will have Chriſt hereafter, and Salvation hereafter, but for the preſent, you had much rather have

your lusts and worldly pleasures; Oh tremble at the thoughts of this, and let it affright you out of your delays, and put you immediately upon soul-work: in a word, never any repented, that they minded the concerns of their souls, union with Christ, walking with God, making sure their calling and Election, so soon; many have repented, that they have minded these things so late; I remember a bitter complaint of *Austin* in his book of Confessions, *I have loved thee too late*, saith he, *O thou so antient, and yet so New a beauty, I have loved thee too late*: he bewails, that he had so long laid out his love upon the creature, and not given Christ his love; could you ask all the saints in heaven whether ever they repented, that they minded the work of Christ, and their souls, so soon; they would tell you no, they repented of nothing, but that they minded it so late; once more therefore let me call upon you, to fall immediately upon soul-work; and never rest, till thy heart crys out to God, as Austin did, when God had really shewed him himself, and made him sensible of his sins; *when God*, saith he, *had shewed me*

Serò te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua & tam nova serò te amavi. Aug.

me my ſin and miſery, there aroſe a great ſtorm within me, which carryed with it a great ſhower of tears, and indeed, I let looſe the reins to tears, crying out to God, in ſuch words as theſe, O Lord how long? how long wilt thou be angry? how long ſhall it be ſaid to morrow, and to morrow? wherefore may it not be now,? why may there not an end be put to my ſin and filthineſs this very hour? and indeed, God made that very ſeaſon the ſeaſon of his converſion: ſo labour, to ſee thy ſin and miſery ſo far, as that thou mayſt cry out, with a holy reſtleſſeneſs to God, how long, ſhall it be to morrow, and to morrow? why may I not be turned to thee now? why may not my ſoul be ingaged in the work of heaven and eternity now?

Tu domine uſquequo uſquequo domine ira ſceris? quamdiu, quamdiu, cras & cras &c. Aug.

Fifthly, would you indeed ſet all right in your Soules, and make all ready for a dying hour? then be much and importunate with God in prayer, to teach you ſo to number your dayes, as to apply your hearts to wiſdome; this I ground upon *Pſal.* 90. 12. where *Moſes* the man of God, is found in this practiſe, *Lord* (ſaith he) *teach us, ſo to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts*

Numerare dies significat non tantum more Arithmeticorum supputare dies: &c. Mo le. in

unto wiſdom; *To number our dayes, is not to number them in an arithmetical, but a ſpiritual way, it is not to caſt up how many dayes, the life of Man conſiſts of, that is eaſily done*; *but it is, ſpiritually and practically to conſider, and lay to heart, the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of our lives together with the various miſeries and calamities, that do attend them*; it is ſeriouſly and fiducially to contemplate the vanity of life, as ſhort and uncertain, and as attended with ſorrows, miſeries, and innumerable troubles; and to apply the heart to wiſedom; 'tis to make Religion, and the work of a mans ſoul, his main buſineſs; it is to make it his great buſineſs and endeavour, to get an intereſt in God and Chriſt, in the Covenant of Grace, and Eternal life; and in time to provide for, and make ſure of a bleſſed eternity; it is to ſet a mans whole ſoul to the work of God, and his own Salvation: now, as ever you would indeed make ready for a dying hour; beg of God to teach you, thus to number your dayes, and thus to apply your hearts to wiſedom: there are two things, I would obſerve, and ſo cloſe this.

Firſt, That ſuch a numbering of our dayes,

dayes, is what the beſt of Saints need, and may make great uſe of: *Moſes* was a very holy Man, and yet he looked upon it as a work uſeful, and of great importance to him, to contemplate the vanity of life, and to think of the ſhortneſs, and uncertainty of his abode here; the moſt holy ſouls need this; the moſt holy ſouls need humbling, they need weaning from this world, they need quickening unto duty, they need to have their hearts awakened, to mind heaven, and a future life; and the right numbring of our dayes, is that which greatly enduceth hereunto.

Secondly, Obſerve, that as this is a work needful and uſeful for the beſt of Saints to be imployed in, ſo it is a work above their own ſtrength, and that which they need Divine aſſiſtance, to enable them unto; *Moſes* was an eminently holy Man, and yet as he ſaw he had need of this, ſo he ſaw it was a a work above his power; and therefore he goes to God, and puts in himſelf among the reſt, and prays for his teachings herein; let us do likewiſe, let us lie much at the foot of God, for his teachings, whereby we may be enabled,

ſo to number our dayes, as thus to apply our hearts unto wiſdom; beg him to make us ſee the vanity and uncertainty of our lives, and that ſo, as effectually to engage us, to make out after a better life.

CHAP. VIII.

Wherein more particular helps, and directions are laid down, in order to the ſetting of things right, and making all ready for a dying hour.

But I would come nearer this great buſineſs, and give you ſome more particular directions in order to your making all ready for a dying hour: and

Firſt, would you indeed have all things right in the matters of your ſouls for a dying hour? then get into Chriſt, get union with Chriſt, and an intereſt in Chriſt by believing: union with Chriſt, and an intereſt in Chriſt, is moſt requiſite and neceſſary, to fit and prepare us for a dying hour; and without it we have, we can have nothing ſet right, nothing in order, nothing in readineſs for

for that hour: you know how the Scripture ſpeaks, *he that hath the Son, hath life; but he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life*, 1 John 5. 12. and *there is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. 8. 1. O my beloved, we ſhall live, or dye, be ſaved, or damned for ever; according as we do, or do not, get union with Chriſt, and an intereſt in Chriſt: this is what lyes at the bottom and foundation of all; of all our hopes, of all our mercies, of all our comforts, of all our acceptation, and communion with God, of all Grace on Earth, and of all Glory in Heaven: and without it, whatſoever our attainments in Religion are, whatever our Profeſſion may be, whatever place, or eſteem we may have in the Church of God, though never ſo raiſed and eminent; yet we have nothing, that will avail us in a dying hour; I remember, a ſaying of a learned man, *That thou mayſt live in death*, ſaith he, *get into Chriſt, implant thy ſelf into Chriſt by believing; Faith joyns and unites us to Chriſt, and they that are in Chriſt cannot dye; for Chriſt is their life*: and indeed, if we have union with Chriſt, he will

Ut in morte vivas, Chriſto per fidem te inſeras, fides conjungit & unit nos cum Chriſto, & qui in Chriſto ſunt illi non moriuntur, nam Chriſtus eſt ipſorum vita. Gerh.

will be life in death it ſelf to us; *bleſſed are the dead, which dye in the Lord*, that is, dye having union with Chriſt, being implanted into Chriſt, *Rev.* 14. 13. if we have union with Chriſt, he will not be only life in death to us, but he will even turn death it ſelf into life; the King of terrors into a King of comforts; in ſo much that the ſoul ſhall be able to triumph over it, as the *Apoſtle* doth, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56, 57. whereas without this, without union with Chriſt, and an intereſt in Chriſt, we ſhall never be able to look death in the face with comfort; but ſhall when we come to dye, be ſome of the miſerableſt ſpectacles in the world. *It* is the ſpeech of a worthy Divine, who is long ſince gone hence *a Chriſtleſs dying man or woman* (ſayes he) *is one of the ſaddeſt ſpectacles in the world*: for a man to be dying and not Chriſtleſs, that is comfortable, for ſuch an one dyes, but to live for ever; he dyes the death of Nature, to live the life of Glory: for a man to be Chriſtleſs, and not dying, is ſomething tollerable; for who knows, but that the next meeting at an Ordinance may be the time of Gods love to him,

him of drawing him into Chriſt? but for a man to be dying and Chriſtleſs, Chriſtleſs and dying too, that is intollerable, that is terrible indeed; for ſuch an one dies to be damned, and he is going off from all hopes and poſſibilities of mercy for ever; oh, therefore above all preſs after union with Chriſt, and an intereſt in Chriſt; this was *Pauls* great care and ſolicitude to the very laſt; that ſo he might go off the Stage with comfort, and that for which he *accounted all things but dung*, as moſt baſe and vile *Phil.*3.8,9. O Soul, didſt thou indeed know and conſider, of how much weight and importance, an intereſt in Chriſt is to thee, with reference to thine eternal happineſs, thou wouldſt cry out as eagerly for Chriſt, as ever *Rachel* did for Children, ſaying, give me Chriſt or elſe I die; give me union with Chriſt, and an intereſt in Chriſt, or I am undone eternally; oh look to the great uniting act of Faith, make a right choice of Chriſt, Chooſe him, as your Lord and Head, your King and Saviour, and renew your choice of him every day, reſigning up your ſelves intirely to him, to be ſaved and governed by him in his own way.

Se-

Secondly, Would you indeed have all ſet right and made ready, in the matters of your ſouls, for a dying hour? then preſs after a firm, and unſhaken aſſurance, of an intereſt in God and his love, and of your right and title to eternal life, of another and a better life, then this here is: without ſome good evidence for heaven, and ſome well-grounded aſſurance of an intereſt in God and eternal life, things are not ready with us, nor are we in ſuch a preparedneſs for a dying hour, as we ought to be; though a man hath an intereſt in God and his love; though he hath a right and title to eternal life and happyneſs; yet as long as he is in the dark, and at an uncertainty in his own ſoul about it, things are out of order with him, and he is greatly unready for a dying hour: for pray mark, as our intereſt in this is requiſite to our dying happily, ſo the ſight and aſſurance of that intereſt is requiſite to our dying comfortably; indeed, when a man hath attained to ſome good evidence for heaven, to ſome well-grounded aſſurance of his intereſt in God and Chriſt, then are things in a good poſture with him in reference to

a dying hour; then he can play with Death, and triumph over it; as *Job* did, when he could ſay, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, Job. 19. 25, 26. And as the *Apoſtle* ſeems to ſpeak of it, 2Cor. 5. 12. *We know, that when our earthly houſe of this tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; for this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon, with our houſe which is from heaven*; None of you do comfortably leave your houſe, unleſs you have another to go unto; much leſs can you comfortably quit this world, unleſs you have ſome well grounded aſſurance of another, and a better life: take a man that is in the dark, and at a loſs as to his intereſt in God and Chriſt, and he knows not what death will do to him, nor where it will lodge him, whether in heaven or in hell, whether upon the Throne of Glory, or in the priſon of eternal darkneſs, in the boſom of Chriſts love, or under the revelations of his infinite and eternal wrath; and is ſuch a one ready for a dying hour? Surely no; as ever therefore you would have things right and ready within indeed for a dying hour,

Secondly, Would you indeed have all ſet right and made ready, in the matters of your ſouls, for a dying hour? then preſs after a firm, and unſhaken aſſurance, of an intereſt in God and his love, and of your right and title to eternal life, of another and a better life, then this here is: without ſome good evidence for heaven, and ſome well-grounded aſſurance of an intereſt in God and eternal life, things are not ready with us, nor are we in ſuch a preparedneſs for a dying hour, as we ought to be; though a man hath an intereſt in God and his love; though he hath a right and title to eternal life and happyneſs; yet as long as he is in the dark, and at an uncertainty in his own ſoul about it, things are out of order with him, and he is greatly unready for a dying hour: for pray mark, as our intereſt in this is requiſite to our dying happily, ſo the ſight and aſſurance of that intereſt is requiſite to our dying comfortably; indeed, when a man hath attained to ſome good evidence for heaven, to ſome well-grounded aſſurance of his intereſt in God and Chriſt, then are things in a good poſture with him in reference to

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hour, you muſt preſs after an aſſurance of your intereſt in God and Chriſt; you muſt do, as the *Apoſtle* exhorts *give all diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*, 2 Pet, 1. 10. You muſt every day preſs after a fuller and firmer aſſurance, as to your eternal intereſt; you muſt be much in faith, much in prayer, much in examining your evidences, much in proving your ſtate, much in looking after the Seal and evidence of the bleſſed Spirit; which is indeed all in all; and never reſt, till you can ſay, my Lord, and my God, my Heaven, my Glory, *God is the rock of my heart, and my Portion for ever*; O then all will be ſweet and well with you; this is that, which the Saints of old have laboured after with their whole might, *Say unto my Soul* (ſaith *David* to God) *I am thy ſalvation*, Pſal. 35. 3. *ſet me as a ſeal upon thy heart, and as a ſeal upon thine arm*, Cant 8. 6. This *Auſtin*, preſſed much after, *Lord*, ſaith he, *tell me what thou art to me, ſay unto my Soul; I am thy Salvation; ſo ſay it, that I may hear it, behold the ears of my heart are before thee; open them, O Lord, and ſay unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation*: Oh, my Beloved this is worth preſſing

Dic mihi Domine quid ſis mihi, dic animæ meæ ſalus tua Ego ſum, ſic dic ut audiam, ecce aures cordis mei ante te domine aperi eas, & dic animæ meæ ſalus tua ego ſum.

ſing after, for this is the welcomeſt news, a poor ſoul can poſſibly hear; to be told that God is his, and Heaven is his, and eternal life is his; and when once this news is come, then welcome life, and welcome death, welcome time, and welcome eternity; then the Soul can ſay, O ſweet Eternity, O bleſſed Eternity. O Sirs, be not ſatisfied; without ſome good aſſurance of Gods love to your ſouls, and your right and title to heaven and Eternal life, yea, without the fulleſt aſſurance; that is attainable here; for know, that there are degrees in aſſurance it ſelf; the Scripture mentions three degrees of aſſurance. Firſt, there is aſſurance, *The work of righteouſneſs is peace, and the fruit of righteouſneſs is aſſurance for ever*, Iſa. 32. 17. and *Give all diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*, as in the place before quoted. Secondly, There is much aſſurance, *our Goſpel came unto you, not in word only, but in power and in the demonſtration of the Spirit, and much aſſurance*, 1 Theſ. 1. 5. Thirdly, there is a full aſſurance, *We deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end*, Heb. 6. 11. Now, my

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Beloved, I would not have you ſatisfied without aſſurance, without much aſſurance, yea without a full aſſurance; the more full your aſſurance is, the more chearfully, joyfully, and triumphingly will you dye.

Thirdly, Would you indeed have all right, all in order, in the matters of your Souls for a dying hour? then labour to maintain a conſtant, actual peace with God every day, making even with him, and renewing the ſence of his pardoning love in your ſouls: as a firm union with Chriſt, and a well-grounded aſſurance of an intereſt in God and eternal life; ſo alſo, an actual peace with God, and a daily renewed pardon from him, is requiſite, to a thorough readineſs and preparedneſs for a dying hour; *David* had an intereſt in God, yea and his intereſt was clear to him; yet how ſolicitous was he, to get all even between God and him, and how uncomfortable was it with him, till he had renewed his peace with God; when by his fall it had been broken? *Pſal.* 51. 8, 12. This alſo is what is evidently held forth *Job* 7. 21. where *Job*, pleads thus with God, *Why doſt thou*

thou not pardon mine iniquity, and take away my tranſgreſſion? for now ſhall I ſleep in the duſt; thou ſhalt ſeek me in the morning, but I ſhall not be: in the verſe before he acknowledged, he had ſinned, and he here intimates, that God frowned on him for his ſin; the ſence of pardoning love was not renewed in his ſoul; which here therefore he pleads for, and that upon this account, becauſe he was ſpeedily to dye; intimating he could not dye with comfort, till he had a renewed ſence of Gods pardoning love: and this is the very thing, which *David* begs, in the Pſalm of my Text, in order to his comfortable going hence; *(viz.)* that *God would take away his tranſgreſſions*, Pſal. 39. 8. as long as there is any ſin, any guilt lying upon our Conſciences, any ſin unpardoned, any difference between God and us, any frowns in his face towards us, we are unready for death, and cannot with that comfort, and boldneſs of ſpirit, welcom it, as we ought; but when our peace with God is maintained, and we have a renewed ſence of his pardoning love in our ſouls; then are things right and in order with us indeed;

deed; and we may think of death with boldneſs and comfort; and therefore mind this, as ever you would be found ready for a dying hour; every day even things between God and you, every day get a freſh ſence of pardon from him.

Firſt, as near, as poſſibly may be, do nothing that may occaſion any breach between God and you, or raiſe any frowns in his face towards you: if you do not break with God, he will not break with you; all breaches, as to peace and friendſhip between God and us, begin on our part; yea, neither will God break with us for little things, in caſe they be not allowed by us; but watched and ſtriven againſt; therefore as near, as poſſibly you can, do nothing, to break and interrupt your peace with God for one moment: and becauſe when you have done all, many things may and will fall out, (we having ſinful, ſining hearts, and living in a world of ſnares and temptations) for which God may juſtly frown upon us: let us

Secondly, every day make even with him; in the cloſe of every day, let us con-

conſider wherein we have broken with God, come ſhort of duty, given any grief, any diſtaſte to his Holy Spirit; and by Faith and Prayer, let us ſue out the pardon of it; and let us not lye down, if poſſible, without ſome intimation of his pardoning love; for which end:

Firſt, We ſhould act Faith on the Blood and Advocateſhip of Jeſus Chriſt; *whom God hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation, through faith in his Blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for remiſſion of ſins*, Rom. 3. 24, 25. And indeed, Chriſt hath ſet up a Standing Office in Heaven, which we may call the Pardon-Office; he procureth new Pardons for his people daily under their new ſins; *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our ſins*, 1 Jo. 2. 1, 2. Have daily recourſe to the Blood of Chriſt; truly without it there is no living; the beſt, the holieſt on earth, have daily need of his Blood, and ſhould have daily recourſe unto it, for the maintaining of their peace, and for the renewing of Gods pardoning love in their Souls.

Secondly, We ſhould be humbly and

earneſtly importunate with God in prayer, reſolving not to let him go without this bleſſing, carrying upon our ſpirits the ſenſe of the worth, and alſo of our unworthineſs of it. Thus the holy men of God of old have done, they have ſued out the pardon of their ſins by Faith and Prayer, and gotten a freſh ſenſe of Gods love when they have broken with him; as I might inſtance in *Job*, in *David*, and others; we ſhould every day pray as that Father did, *O Lord*, ſaith he, *do not after the manner of a Judge, weigh or conſider what I have done, what I have ſpoken, what I have thought, but blot out all my ſins with thy own Blood:* And as another of them did, *Lord*, ſaith he, *there is that in me which may offend thy holy eyes, I know and confeſs it, but who ſhall cleanſe me? or to whom ſhall I fly for relief, but to thee? O hide not thy face from me.* Truly when we have walked moſt watchfully, moſt circumſpectly, many things may, and will fall out, that may offend the pure eyes of Gods glory, which we ſhould confeſs and bewail before him, ſuing out the pardon of them by the Blood of his Son: Some of the Saints have made this

Ne quæſo more judicis quid egerim, quid dixerim, quid cogitarim ponderes, ſed peccata mea omnia tuo cruore deleas. Bern. *Noli abſcondere faciem tuam Domine, habet anima mea quæ offendant oculos tuos, fateor & Scio, ſed quis mundabit eam aut cui alteri præter te clamabo.* Aug.

this their daily practiſe, and ſo have maintained their peace for many years together; and when they have come to die, have gloriouſly triumphed over Death, and have gone off the Stage with much comfort, and ſo ſhould we.

Fourthly, Would you indeed have all right, all in order in your Souls for a dying hour? then be true and faithful to your own Conſciences, that you may have them for you, and not againſt you, both while you live, and when you die. Conſcience (my beloved) is Chriſts Deputy, or Vicegerent in the Soul; it is both a Judge and a Witneſs for God within us; it either *accuſes, or excuſes*, acquits, or condemns, *Rom.* 2. 15. and according as Conſcience is either for us, or againſt us, ſo we are either ready, or not ready; prepared, or not prepared, for Death and Judgment: If we have the Witneſs and Judgment of our Conſciences for us, then have we boldneſs and comfort both in life and death, then we can welcom Deaths approach to us; but if the Witneſs and Judgment of Conſcience be againſt us, then Death cannot but be terrible to us; *This is*

our rejoycing (ſaith the Apoſtle) *the teſtimony of our Conſciences, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not in fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. And again, *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater then our hearts, and knoweth all things; but if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God*, 1 Joh. 3. 21. O, my beloved, as a peace with God, ſo a ſound and holy peace with a mans own Conſcience (that is to ſay, to have the witneſs and judgment of a mans Conſcience for him, and not againſt him) is highly requiſite for a right diſpoſing and preparing of us for a dying hour: As ever therefore you would have all ready, and in order againſt ſuch an hour, mind this, and look after this; be ſure you carry it ſo to your own conſciences, as that you may have them always for you, and not againſt you, while you live; and for you, and not againſt you, when you come to die; in order to which, mind theſe two things.

Firſt, Labour to get your Conſciences well inlightened and informed, and be much with God in prayer in order thereto;

thereto; beg and implore God for a true and faithful conſcience, a conſcience that will bear a true and faithful witneſs in your Souls, and that will paſs a right judgment upon things, both upon your ſtate and actions. In *Heb.* 10. 21. we read of *a true heart*, or a true conſcience; that is, a conſcience rightly informed, a conſcience that bears a true and faithful witneſs, and that paſſeth a true and faithful judgment upon things, ſuch a conſcience ſhould we beg of God, and labour by all means poſſible to attain unto. O, my beloved, it is a dangerous thing to have an erronious conſcience, a miſtaking conſcience, a conſcience not rightly informed: For pray mark, this is what leaves a man under a neceſſity of ſinning, and ſo of grieving the Spirit of God on the one hand, and it indangereth his peace and comfort on the other hand; for having an erronious conſcience, whether we obey it, or obey it not, we ſin; if we obey it, we ſin, becauſe conſcience commands what is not agreeable to the Word of God; if we obey it not, we ſin, becauſe we rebel againſt the light and dictates of conſcience, omitting that

which conſcience tells us is a duty, though it be not a duty; or doing that which conſcience tells us is a ſin, though it be not a ſin: Labour therefore to get your conſciences well informed and inlightened.

Secondly, Be ſure you do nothing againſt the light and dictates of conſcience, being rightly informed, but obey it in all things. In *Job* 24. 13. we read of ſome that *rebel againſt the light*; that is, that do ſin againſt their own conſciences, which is a double ſin, a ſin cloathed with great aggravations, and greatly diſcompoſeth us for a dying hour: but we muſt take heed of this, and liſten to the voice of conſcience, conſcience regulated by the Word of God: God ſpeaks to us by our conſciences, he ſpeaks to us through his Word by our conſciences, and he ſpeaks to us through his Providences by our conſciences, and we ſhould take heed of violating the dictates, or ſpeaking of conſcience in the leaſt. Doth not conſcience many times tell us, ſuch and ſuch ways which we walk in are not good, and muſt be turned from, or we are undone for ever? And now we ſhould be true and faith-

faithful to our own conſciences, and ſpeedily turn from thoſe ways; we ſhould have nothing to do with any thing that conſcience condemns us in and for. Again, doth not conſcience many times tell you, that ſuch and ſuch duties are totally neglected, or elſe ſeldome or ſlightly performed by you, which yet you ought to be converſant and diligent in the performance of? Now you ſhould herein alſo be faithful and true to your own conſciences, living up to the conſtant, diligent, ſpiritual performance of thoſe duties. Again, doth not conſcience many times tell you, that things are not right with you, that it is an evil frame of ſpirit you live in, that you are too carnal, too light, too vain, too frothy, too eager in your purſuits of this world, and too remiſs in your purſuits of Heaven and Eternity? Now as ever you would be ready for a dying hour, you ſhould be faithful to your own conſciences, ſetting that right which is amiſs, and haſtening out of that evil frame, into the contrary gracious frame. (Oh my beloved) if you be true and faithful to conſcience, conſcience will be true and faithful to you,

witneſſing for you, and not againſt you, both while you live, and when you die. In a word, in all things labour to keep a good conſcience; this was *Pauls* great care and exerciſe, Acts 24. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a conſcience void of offence towards God, and towards man*: O this will be a ſweet and bleſſed exerciſe, and the more we are found in it while we live, the more comfort will it afford us when we come to die.

Fifthly, Would you indeed have all things right, and in order in the matters of your Souls, when a dying hour comes? then labour for much purity of heart and life, and by no means admit of any ſin, any corruption whatſoever; the more pure and holy we are, the more ready are we, and in the better poſture things are with us for a dying hour: *Without holineſs*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *no man ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14. Holineſs is neceſſary unto happineſs; holineſs is the way unto happineſs; holineſs is what fits and prepares us for happineſs, and brings us unto happineſs; yea holineſs is a part of our happineſs, a great part of the happineſs of Heaven it ſelf

ſelf lies in holineſs; accordingly the more holy we are, the more are we ſuited to, and prepared for the future happineſs, and ſo for Death and Judgment; for that which prepares us for the future happineſs, that alſo prepares us for death, which is but an in-let into that happineſs for ever: Therefore, if you would have all things right, all things ready indeed for a dying hour, then labour for the exacteſt purity and holineſs that poſſibly you can: This is that which the *Apoſtle* aims at, and prays for, on the behalf of the *Theſſalonians*, as moſt conducing to the preparing of them for their latter end, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 12, 13. *And the Lord make you to abound and increaſe in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you, to the end he may eſtabliſh your hearts unblameable in holineſs before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all his Saints.* The poſture he would have them to be in at the coming of Chriſt, is the poſture of unblameable holineſs, which indeed is the beſt and readieſt poſture: The ſame thing he prays for, in order to the ſame end, in 1 *Theſ.* 5, 23. *And the very*

very God of peace ſanctifie you wholly, and I pray God that your whole ſpirit, ſoul and body, be preſerved blameleſs, unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: this is that alſo, which that other Apoſtle injoyns in order hereunto, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. *Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs*; the more ſpotleſs, and blameleſs we are in our ſpirits and wayes; the more ready we are for Death and Judgment: O preſs after an eminency in holineſs, admitting of none, no not the leaſt taint or tincture of ſin or ſinful defilement upon any terms whatſoever: unholy ſouls are unready ſouls, they are unready for Death, unready for Judgment, unready for the future life: and for men to talk of being ready for theſe, and yet be unholy, is the greateſt folly in the world: therefore labour for much purity and holineſs.

Firſt, Labour for much purity and holineſs in your lives and walkings: this is what God indiſpenſably calls for, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *As he which hath called you is Holy, ſo be ye Holy in all manner of converſation; becauſe it is written, be ye Holy, for I am Holy*: We ſhould preſs after

after universal holiness: there should be a vein and tincture of holiness run through all we do, even our Civil, as well as our Religious actions; we should as near as possibly, be dedicated and devoted to God, and our lives should be lives of walking with him: they, and they only, who walk with God, while they live, are those, who will be found ready to live with God, when they come to dye: as for all careless, licentious ones, let them never talk of being ready for death and the future life; for they are at an utter distance from any such thing: indeed ready they are, but for what? ready for Hell, ready for the wrath of God, ready for destruction: but they are not at all ready for a blessed Eternity: the Apostle weeps over such, as being indeed thus ready, *Phil.* 3. 18, 19. *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the Cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things*: many there are, who profess and hope well of themselves, as to another life, who yet are loose and carnal, wicked and licentious

tious in their lives and walkings: they do not watch, and keep their garments; but wallow in the mire of their luſts and pollutions: they ſtain their profeſſion, with foul, groſs, and ſcandalous ſins; at leaſt, they live, and allow themſelves, in ſome ſecret way and haunt of ſining, indulging this and the other luſt: but (my Beloved) theſe are far indeed from being ready for a dying hour; and muſt expect to be caſt off from God and Chriſt for ever: ſuch were thoſe *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. *they came, and cryed Lord, Lord*: came with their gifts, parts, and priviledges; but, Chriſt ſent them away with a *depart from me, ye workers of iniquity*: ſo in *Jer.* 7. *and beginning*, we read of ſome that made profeſſion of God and his wayes, and yet walked in ſin, and wallowed in all manner of abomination: and what is the iſſue? verſe the 15. ſaith God, *I will caſt you out of my ſight*: God will at laſt caſt off all looſe, licentious walkers; *Pſal.* 21. 9. *David* prays thus, *Gather not my ſoul with ſinners*: and truly, if you would not be gathered with ſinners at laſt, you muſt not walk in ſin with ſinners now: and as for the

Saints

Saints themſelves, ſo far as they let down their watch, and neglect their walking with God; ſo far as they give way to a looſe, vain, heedleſs way of living; ſo far they have things out of order with them, and they are unready for a dying hour: *Behold I come as a thief*, (ſaith Chriſt) *bleſſed is he, that watcheth and keepeth his garments; leaſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame*; Rev. 16. 15. So far, as the Saints carry it unbecoming their high and holy profeſſion, (which is too too frequent with them) ſo far they are ſhort of that compleat readineſs for Death and Eternity they ſhould preſs after.

Secondly, Labour for much purity and holineſs in your hearts and affections: we muſt be pure and holy within, as well as without; in our hearts and affections, as well as in our lives and walkings; if we would have all right indeed for a dying hour; *who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand in his holy place?* the anſwer is, *he that hath clean hands and a pure heart*, Pſal. 24. 3,4. and Chriſt expreſly tells us, *bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. Indeed impure

impure hearts are unfit to ſee God; he is a pure and holy God; nor may impure hearted ones expect that bleſſed ſight. I remember a ſaying, which I have read in one of the Antients, (which I look upon to be a great ſaying) *Woe and alas, O Lord,* (ſaith he) *how prepoſterous is it? how raſh and unadviſed? how inordinate? how remote from the rule of the Word of thy truth and wiſdom; for a man to deſire to ſee God, with an unclean heart?* Oh have a watchful eye upon your hearts, and labour to keep them as free from any taint and tincture of ſin, as poſſibly you can.

Heu heu, Domine quam præproperum eſt, quam temerarium, quam inordinatum, quam alienum à regula verbi veritatis & ſapientiæ tuæ, corde immundo velle videre Deum? Bern. Solil.

Firſt, Be ſure you ſuffer no luſt, to get up into the throne, where it is too too often found: when ſin is conſented to by the will, the luſt is on the throne in the heart; and indeed it is wonderful to think, how ſoon one or another corruption will mount up into the throne in the ſoul, if we let down our watch but a little; but oh take heed of this: ſo far as any one luſt whatſoever is predominant within us; ſo far we are marvellous unready for a dying hour: and not only ſo, but

Secondly,

Secondly, Watch narrowly againſt the very firſt riſings and motions of ſin within: nip luſt, if poſſible, in the very bud and bloſſom: it is true, this calls upon us, to have a very curious eye upon our hearts, and indeed ſuch an eye we ſhould have upon them, we muſt have upon them, if we mean to be Chriſtians indeed: Grace will teach a man, not only to oppoſe the acts of ſin, and to watch againſt the reign of any heart-luſt; but alſo to oppoſe the very firſt motions and riſings of ſin in the ſoul: And the more you do this, the better poſture you are in for a dying hour.

CHAP. IX.

A further direction in order to a compleat Preparation for Death, to preſs after the nobleſt ſtrains of Grace, ſeveral of theſe pointed at and inſiſted on as tending hereunto.

Sixthly, WOuld you indeed have all ready, and in order in your ſouls for a dying hour? then reſt

reſt not in low and ordinary, but aſpire after the higheſt and nobleſt ſtrains of Grace. The better to underſtand this, you muſt know, that there are ſome higher and more noble ſtrains of Grace then ordinary, ſtrains of Grace that carry a peculiar glory and excellency in them, and do in an eminent manner delight the heart of God: indeed every ſtrain of Grace, even the leaſt and loweſt, has a beauty and glory in it, and is a pleaſure to Gods heart: the leaſt dram of Godly ſorrow, the leaſt holy awe of God and trembling at his Word, the leaſt breathing of love and deſire towards him, the leaſt leaning upon him, in a way of hope and dependance; Oh it has a great glory in it, and is a delight to Gods ſoul: *the Lord taketh pleaſure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy*, Pſal. 147. 11. But my Beloved, there are ſome more choice and eminent ſtrains and actings of Grace, that are above the ordinary rate, and do peculiarly delight the heart of God, and bring honour to him; and the more you come up to theſe, and live under the power of theſe; the more ready

poſture

poſture you are in for a dying hour. Grace is the beginning of glory: 'tis (as a worthy Divine expreſſes it) *the infancy of heaven and glory*; and the higher it riſes in us, the nearer it comes to glory, and the more it fits us for it: therefore, I ſay, reſt not in low and ordinary, but covet and preſs after the higheſt and nobleſt ſtrains of Grace, ſome of which I ſhall here ſet down, and inſiſt a little upon, in order to this great end of being found under the exacteſt readineſs for a dying hour: The noble ſtrains of Grace I would have you come up unto are theſe.

Gratia eſt ætas infantilis gloriæ. Daven. in Col.

1. For a man to be high and yet low; high in worth and attainments, but low in ſpirit, low in his own thoughts and apprehenſions of himſelf, to be humble under high and great acquirements, this is noble Grace. 'Tis ſaid of *Athanaſius*, that he was *high in worth but low in ſpirit*: he had great attainments, but was very humble and lowly under all, which is mentioned as a peculiar excellency in him: and I remember a ſaying which I have read in one of the Antients, ſpeaking of humility;

ὑψηλὸς τοῖς ἔργοις, ταπεινὸς δὲ τῷ φρονήματι ----

Non magnum eſt eſſe humilem in abjectione, magna prorſus & rara virtus humilitas honorata. Bern. Ser. 2. ſuper Cant.

For a man to be humble (ſayes he) *in a low, deſpicable, abject condition, this is no great matter; but honourable humility*, that is to ſay, for a man to be humble in an high and proſperous condition, to be humble under eminent injoyments, *this is a great thing, a rare virtue indeed.* Oh for a man to be high in attainments, high in gifts, high in graces, high in comforts, high in ſervices, high in Succeſſes, high in place and eſteem among men; and yet at the ſame time to be low in mind, low in heart, low in his eſteems and apprehenſions of himſelf, this is an high and eminent ſtrain of Grace: this *Paul* excelled in, and 'twas his crown and glory: he was a man of as high attainments and accompliſhments, as moſt that ever lived, he was high in gifts, high in graces, high in comforts, high in ſervices, high in ſucceſſes, high in all true worth and excellency; and yet how low, how humble in ſpirit was he? how little in his own eyes, and how vile in his own eſteems? you know how he ſpeaks of himſelf, *the chief of ſinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *leſs then the leaſt of all Saints*, Epheſ. 3. 8. *I am the leaſt of the Apoſtles, not worthy*

to

to be called an Apoſtle, 1 Cor. 15. 9. *I am nothing*, 2 Cor. 12. 11. This alſo was a part of Chriſts crown and glory: who ever ſo eminent in gifts and graces? who ever abounded with ſuch glorious indowments, as he? and yet who ſo meek, ſo humble, ſo lowly, as he? *learn of me* (ſayes he) *for I am meek and lowly of heart*, Mat. 11. 29. In a verſe or two before he had told us, that *all things were deliver'd to him by the Father*; and yet here, *I am meek and lowly in heart*: he was humble under all his advancements and attainments. Oh labour to be like him herein; whatever your attainments are, labour to be humble under them, and that becauſe he was ſo: *Bluſh, O duſt and aſhes, bluſh to think of being proud, be aſhamed to be proud*: *God humbles himſelf, and doſt thou exalt thy ſelf?* ſo one ſpeaks. And again elſewhere; *'tis intollerable impudence* (ſayes he) *that when majeſty empties and humbles it ſelf, a vile worm ſhould ſwell and be blown up with pride.* O be humble, whatever your attainments are: the more humble you are, the more precious you are in Gods ſight; for *he hath reſpect unto the lowly, but beholdeth*

Erubeſce ſuperbire Cinis, Deus ſe humiliat, & tu te exaltas? Id. Ib.

Intollerabilis impudentia eſt ut ubi ſeſe exinaniuit majeſtas, vermiculus infletur & intumeſcat. Bern. Ser. de Nat. Chriſti.

Nihil tibi arroges ex his quæ in te ſunt, præter peccata, tanto eris ante oculos Dei pretioſior, quanto fueris ante oculos tuos deſpectior. Bern de modo benè vivendi.

holdeth the proud a far off, Pſal. 138. 6. yea *he reſiſteth the proud*, he ſets himſelf in battel array againſt the proud, *Jam.* 4. 6. *Arrogate nothing to thy ſelf of thoſe things that are in thee, but thy ſins, by ſo much the more precious thou art in Gods eyes, by how much the more vile and deſpicable thou art in thine own eyes*: and to ſay no more, none more ready to dye, then the humble and lowly perſon; none more unready, then the proud and high-minded.

2. For a man to be full, and yet empty, full of the injoyments, and yet empty of the love of the world; for a man to injoy an affluence of this worlds good, a fulneſs of all creature comforts and contentments, and yet to be dead to all, and ſit looſe from all, placing his whole happineſs in God and Chriſt, this is a choice, a noble, an excellent ſtrain of grace indeed. We read of ſome, and but of ſome in Scripture, who under an affluence of outward injoyments, have been wean'd from all, and ſate looſe from all, and have kept up their communion with God, placing the whole reſt and happineſs of their Souls therein; ſome ſuch (I ſay) we read of in Scrip-

Scripture, but truly they are but very few, and indeed 'tis both a rare and a difficult thing for a ſoul thus to do: Theſe things, eſpecially when injoyed in the fulneſs of them, are ſo apt to ingroſs the heart to themſelves, and to alienate it from God, and communion with God, that 'tis indeed a very rare and difficult thing for a man under an affluence of them, to ſit looſe from them, and make God, and communion with God, all in all to him. 'Tis a great ſaying which I have read of a learned man, *Although adverſity breaks many, yet proſperity, and a fulneſs of injoyments, kills many more; And how rare a man is that, who in proſperity does not, at leaſt a little, in ſome degree or other let down his Watch, and remit his ſtrictneſs and exactneſs in walking.* David *was a wiſe man*, and Solomon *was a wiſer; and yet both the one and the other diſcovered great ſin and folly through abounding proſperity*: So that I ſay, 'tis both a rare and difficult thing; but by how much the more rare and difficult it is, by ſo much the more excellent and eminent, when attained. Oh for a man to ſwim Chin-deep in the ſtreams of

Licèt multos frangat adverſitas, tamen multò plures occidit proſperitas. Quàm rarus extitit qui non vel modicè in proſperitate relaxarit à cuſtodia ſua & diligentiæ, ſapiens David, ſapientior Solomon fuit ſed blandientibus nimis proſperis & ſecundis rebus alter ex parte, alter ex toto deſipuit. Id.

creature comforts, and yet not to forſake the Fountain of living waters; for a man to have the ſtreams run pleaſantly on each hand of him, and yet to bathe and delight only in the Fountain as his reſt and happineſs; for a man in the height of proſperity to be able to ſay to God, as the Pſalmiſt in his affliction did, Pſal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I deſire beſides thee*; this is Noble Grace indeed: Oh labour to come up to this: whatever your worldly injoyments are, though never ſo great, ſo high, ſo pleaſant; yet as ever you would be ready for a dying hour, ſit looſe from all, dye to all; the more dead we are to the world, the more ready we are to go out of the world: a worldly ſpirit, a ſpirit in love with this world, is moſt unready for a dying hour: how can he be ready to leave the world, that is in love with the world? a worldly ſpirit is moſt odious to the ſpirit of God, and moſt unſuitable to the future life, and one, living in that ſpirit, cannot be fit to dye. 'Tis a great ſaying I have read in one, *He is perfect who ſe ſoul is alienated from the world, but* (ſayes he) *that ſoul*

Ille eſt perfectus qui mente à ſeculo eſt elongatus: longè à Deo eſt animus cui hæc miſerabilis vita ducis eſt. Bern de modo benè viv.

ſoul is far from God, to whom this miſerable life is ſweet: that is to ſay, who is found of theſe poor things here. O dye, dye daily to the world under all your enjoyments of it; if you would indeed be ready to dye.

3. For a man to be empty and yet full, to be deſtitute of all outward comforts and enjoyments, and yet to want nothing, but to be content, and to ſee all in God, and injoy all in God, for a man to be afflicted and diſtreſs'd, and yet at the ſame time ſee a fulneſs and ſufficiency of all good and happineſs in a naked God, and naked godlineſs, and accordingly to live upon him, and reſt ſatisfied in him, this is a noble ſtrain of Grace indeed, this the Prophet, and in him the Church reſolved upon, *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. *Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls.* Here you ſee is a moſt ſad ſuppoſition, a moſt forlorn and deſtitute condition ſuppoſed to come; well and what then? in caſe all this comes to paſs, what will the Church do

then? that the 18 *verſe* tells us, *yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation*: ſhe is reſolved to live upon God, and delight her ſelf with God, ſhe ſees enough in him alone, and ſets him and her intereſt in him over againſt all wants, loſſes, and afflictions. So the Apoſtles, 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. who were *as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things*: they ſaw all in Chriſt, and injoyed all in Chriſt. *Here* (as one gloſſes upon the place) *we poſſeſs nothing, but do wander up and down from place to place; yet poſſeſſing Chriſt, in him we poſſeſs all things.* Oh for a man to ſee and injoy all in Chriſt, when the world frowns upon him, and is low with him, this is a noble ſtrain of Grace, and let me ſay this, that 'tis an argument that we have carnal hearts, if we ſee not all in God and enough in God to ſatisfie us and make us happy, whether we have any thing or nothing of this worlds: Heaven, which death ſends us to, if we are indeed ready for it, is nothing elſe but the viſion and fruition of God, for there he is all in all: and certainly if we do not ſee all in God now, and enough in God now, we cannot ſuppoſe

Nihil hic poſſidemus ſed incertis vagamur ſedibus, Chriſtum tamen poſſidentes, omnia in illo poſſidemus. Mar.

ſuppoſe our ſelves to be ſo fully ready for death and Eternity, as we ought to be.

4. For a man to have no affliction, and yet to be deeply afflicted, to be wholly free from all perſonal affliction, and yet greatly to lay to heart, and be afflicted for the afflictions of Gods name and people, this is glorious Grace, Grace in luſtre: 'tis the obſervation of a worthy Divine, that in the day of the Churches trouble and affliction, when both his name and people do greatly ſuffer, God does ſometimes leave ſome of his people an affluence of all outward good things; when others are ſtript of all their comforts, they are full: when others are in ſtraights, they abound; neither is there any cloud upon their Tabernacle: and this God does to try them, whether they will take up in their injoyments, and forget the afflictions of his name and people, and truly not to do ſo, but in ſuch a caſe to lay the Churches afflictions to heart, and to bleed and mourn, with the bleeding intereſt of Gods name and people, this is pure Grace, and marvellous pleaſing to God: ſuch Grace ſome of the Saints have

have come up unto, ſuch Grace was found in *David*, 2 Sam. 7. 1, 2. *and it came to paſs, when the King ſate in his houſe, and the Lord had given him reſt round about from all enemies, that the King ſaid unto* Nathan *the Prophet, ſee now, I dwell in an houſe of Cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within Curtains.* Mark, all was well with *David*, he had reſt, and he dwelt in an houſe of Cedar, he had all things ſuitable for and becoming a King: ah but all was not well with the intereſt of God and his worſhip: *Davids* houſe and intereſt proſpered; but it fared not ſo well with the houſe and intereſt of God; and therefore all his injoyments were as nothing to him, he ſo laid the ſufferings of Gods name and worſhip to heart. The like was found in *Nehemiah*, *Neh. begin.* all things were well with him in his own perſon, he was the Kings Cup-bearer, and lived under the injoyment of an affluence of all outward contentments; and yet was in deep affliction of ſpirit upon the account of the Churches affliction; *when I heard theſe words*, (ſayes he) *verſe* 4. theſe words, what words? why that *the remnant that were left*

left of the captivity were in great affliction and reproach, that the wall of Jeruſalem was broken down, and that the gates thereof were burnt with fire. So *verſ.* 3. now *when I heard theſe words, I ſate down and wept, and mourned certain dayes, and faſted and prayed before the God of heaven*; and in *Chap.* 2. *beg. his countenance*, 'tis ſaid, *was ſad* upon this account. Oh this was rare Grace, choice Grace! no perſonal affliction, yet deeply afflicted in and with the afflictions of the Church, ſo deeply afflicted, that all his perſonal comforts, though great, were nothing to him. The like you find in *Daniel*, *Dan.* 10. 2, 3. Oh labour to come up to this ſtrain of Grace: it may be, things are well with you, and you have all that heart can wiſh; but if they are not ſo with the intereſt of Gods name and people, you ſhould be deeply afflicted for this in the midſt of all your perſonal comforts, and the more of this ſpirit is in you, the more excellent your Grace is.

5. For a man chearfully to ſubmit to, and acquieſce in the will of God, when moſt ſharp and ſevere upon his outward intereſt, this is a noble ſtrain of Grace.

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When God ſhall exerciſe a man with rending, tearing diſpenſations, adding ſorrow to ſorrow to him, breaking him with breach upon breach, cauſing all his waves and his billows to go over him; and yet then for him quietly to acquieſce in, and chearfully to ſubmit to what God does, this is choice Grace: ſuch Grace was found in *Aaron*, *Lev.* 10. 3. God ſlew two of his Sons at once, and the diſpenſation was attended with ſo many aggravating circumſtances as made it almoſt unparallel, not to be equall'd, ſo terrible was it; and yet under that great ſtroke, *Aaron held his peace*, he ſubmitted freely, and acquieſced chearfully: the like was found in *Job*, when God had broken him all to pieces, he worſhips him, and bleſſes his name, *Job* 1. 21, 22. and this was eminent in Chriſt himſelf, and was indeed his crown and glory: *Father not my will, but thy will be done*, Mat. 26. 39. he freely ſubmits his will to the Fathers, though he ſaw the Father coming forth againſt him in a moſt terrible diſpenſation. O for a poor ſoul to lye down at the foot of God, and to be ſo melted into his will, as chearfully to bow to it, and acquieſce

Divinæ voluntati acquievit. Mal.

in

in it, under the ſharpeſt diſpenſations, this is noble Grace indeed. Oh preſs after this, this is very neceſſary to prepare us for a dying hour, and the more of this, the more ready for that hour.

6. For a man to maintain the actings of his Faith in God, and to think honourably of him, when yet he frowns, and all things ſeem to make againſt the ſoul, this is a noble ſtrain of Grace. Such Grace was found in *Abraham*, who, 'tis ſaid, *againſt hope, believed in hope*, and ſo *was ſtrong in faith*, Rom. 4. 18, 19, 20. when he had no incouragement, yea when all things oppoſed him; yet then he maintained his Faith in God. So *Job*, *chap.* 13. 15. *though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* O to love a ſmiting God, and to truſt in a ſlaying God, this is noble Grace: for a man to maintain the actings of his Faith in God, when he comes forth as an enemy againſt him; this God calls for; he expects, that *when we walk in darkneſs, and ſee no light, then we ſhould truſt in the name of the Lord*; and ſo to do is noble Grace, *Iſa.* 50. 10, 11. truly 'tis oftentimes the caſe of Gods people, that they walk in dark-

Quum nullum occurreret argumentum, imò quum omnia pugnarent, credere tamen non deſtitit. Calv. in loc.

darkneſs, and ſee no light, all things ſeem to be againſt them. Poſſibly God frowns and afflicts, he frowns within, and he afflicts without; 'yea the poor 'ſoul ſees nothing but difficulties and 'diſcouragements, look which way he 'will: he looks into his own heart, 'and there he cannot find any one grace 'or gracious diſpoſition, he looks into 'the Word, and there perhaps he can't 'ſee any one promiſe, that he dares lay 'hold upon; he looks back for former 'experiences, and they are all out of 'ſight; he runs to his evidences, and 'they are all blotted, that he can't read 'them. Thus he is beſet with difficulties, and all things ſeem to make againſt him both within and without; and yet now, when thus in the dark, for the ſoul to believe in God, and think well and honourably of him, this is noble Grace indeed, this is Faith in luſtre: to call Chriſt Lord, when he calls us Dog, and to faſten by Faith upon him, when he is beating us off, as to ſenſe at leaſt, as 'twas with the woman, *Mat.* 15. 26, 27, 28. this is glorious Grace: for a man to think well, and hope well, and believe well, in the face of frowns and diſcou-

diſcouragements; for a man, when God is frowning and ſmiting, cordially to ſay, this is but for a time, he will ſmile again, he is bu behind the Curtain, and will appear again, his deſign is not to ruine me but refine me, he is but making me to prize his Grace and preſence more; there is love in all this: O for a man to believe that there is love in Gods heart, when he ſees nothing but frowns in his face, and meets with nothing hardly but blows from his hand; for a man to believe, that God intends nothing but good, when he inflicts variety of evils, ſurely this is glorious Grace. O that you would labour for ſuch Grace! ſuch Grace will look death in the face with boldneſs. 'Tis a great ſpeech which holy *Rutherford* hath, *I lay inhibitions upon my thoughts* (ſayes he) *that they receive no ſlanders of my only, only beloved: let him even ſay out of his own mouth, there is no hope, yet I will dye in that ſweet beguile, it is not ſo: but I ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God, it is my joy to believe under the water, and to dye with faith in my hand griping of Chriſt.* Beg ſuch Grace of God.

7. For a man to ſee a beauty and excellency

cellency in ſervice as well as in injoyment, in work as well as in reward, and accordingly to have his heart lye in it, this alſo is noble Grace. Sirs, there is a beauty and excellency in ſervice: for a man to be uſed and imploy'd for God, and to act for him in the world, is the higheſt honour and excellency (next to union and communion with him) that can be put upon a poor creature: 'twas the honour of Chriſt, 'tis the honour of Angels: ſervice is better then injoyment; *'tis a more bleſſed thing to give then to receive*, Acts 20. 35 now when a ſoul has anſwerable thoughts and apprehenſions about it, does practically, and indeed, ſee a beauty and excellency in ſervice for God, and accordingly is active for him, willing to be imployed by him, and that though he has no reward at preſent from him; this is noble Grace. This was found in *Paul*, *unto me* (ſayes he) *is this grace given to preach unto the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*, Epheſ. 3. 8. he look'd on't as an honour, a favour to be imployed in the work and ſervice of Chriſt. And again, 1 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he accounted*

accounted me faithful, putting me into the Miniſtry. Here he bleſſes Chriſt his Lord and Maſter, for uſing of him in his work; yea ſuch a worth, beauty, and excellency did he ſee in ſervice, that he was content to ſtay out of Heaven and the boſom of Chriſts love, where yet he earneſtly longed to be, that he might do further ſervice for Chriſt in this world. So you find *Phil.* 1. 21, 22, 23. O for a ſoul to long, and long earneſtly for Heaven, and the immediate injoyment of Chriſt there, and yet to be content to ſtay here in a ſinful, ſining, troubleſome world, meerly to do ſome further ſervice for Chriſt, and to honour him yet in the diſcharge of his work and warfare, this is high Grace, this holy *Rutherford* had attained unto, he could under high aſſurances of Heaven, be content to ſtay many years out of it to preach Chriſt. The ſame mind dwelt in Chriſt himſelf, who *went about doing good, making it his meat and drink to do his Fathers will, and to finiſh his work*: Oh when a ſoul comes to this, then he is fit to live, and fit to dye; when with that antient Father, we come to ſay indeed, *what is it to live, and not to live*

Quid prodeſt eſſe quod eſſe non prodeſt? Tertul de pudicit.

for uſe and ſervice? when we value life and dayes in the world, no further then we are ſome way ſerviceable to Chriſt, this is crowning Grace.

8. For a man to rejoyce in the gifts, graces, and uſes of others, and that though they out-ſhine and eclipſe his; for a man to rejoyce to ſee Grace flouriſh in others, and to ſee the work of God carried on by others, though he himſelf be laid aſide and does not ſhare in the honour of it, this is pure Grace, Grace in luſtre: ſuch Grace was found in *Moſes*, *Envieſt thou for my ſake?* (ſaid he to *Joſhua*, who would have had him to forbid *Eldad* and *Medad* to propheſie in the Camp) *would God that all the Lords people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his ſpirit upon them*, Num. 11.29. he was ſo far from envying at them, that he wiſhes there were more of them: ſuch Grace was found alſo in *John* the *Baptiſt*, Jo. 3.26,27,30. he rejoyced in Chriſts being owned, and honoured, and flock'd unto, and in the increaſe of his eſteem with men, though to his own abaſement. In *verſe* 26. ſome of *Johns* Diſciples come, and tell him, that *all men come to Chriſt*; well, ſayes he,

he, 'tis but his due, *verſe* 27. *a man can receive nothing, unleſs it be given him from heaven: you your ſelves bear me witneſs, that I ſaid, I am not the Chriſt; and this my joy is fulfilled, that he muſt increaſe, and I muſt decreaſe*: as if he had ſaid, 'tis ſo far from being a trouble to me, that 'tis indeed the compleating of my joy: ſuch Grace was found in *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 18. who rejoyced that Chriſt was preach'd, though with a deſign to cloud and eclipſe him; *Chriſt is preach'd, and I therein do rejoyce, yea and will rejoyce.* Some are apt to think 'twill be an affliction to me, (ſayes he) that Chriſt is preach'd by any but my ſelf, whereas indeed this is ground of great joy to me; I rejoyce that though I cannot be permitted to preach Chriſt my ſelf, yet that ſo many others do preach him. And I remember a great ſpeech of *Luther*, (arguing the ſame Grace to be in him) writing to *Melanchon* to comfort him under the lets and oppoſition the work and cauſe of God met withall in his time; the cauſe of God was oppoſed, and his work obſtructed, in the ſenſe of which, *Melanchon* was greatly troubled and de-

jected, and *Luther* underſtanding it, writes an Epiſtle to him to comfort and encourage him, in which he has this ſaying; *God* (ſayes he) *is able to raiſe the dead, and he is able to ſupport his falling cauſe, and to raiſe it, when fallen; if he ſhall not account us worthy to be uſed therein, let him do it by others, and make uſe of others.* Mark, he was content the work of God ſhould be done by others. There are two things which I look upon to carry as pure and noble Grace in them, as any whatever: one is, to be willing to be uſed in Gods work, without being taken notice of, or having the honour of it: the other is, for a man to rejoyce to ſee the work of God carried on by others, though he himſelf be laid aſide, and has not the honour of being uſed therein. Oh labour for ſuch Grace, Grace that will rejoyce in the gifts, graces, uſes, and ſucceſſes of others, though you thereby are out-ſhined.

Potens eſt Deus mortuos ſuſcitare, potens eſt & cauſam ſuam labentem ſervare, lapſam erigere, ſi nos digni non erimus fiat per alios. Melch. Adam de vita Luth.

9. For a man to have great affection to the name and honour of God and Chriſt, and to think nothing too much to do, too hard to ſuffer, or too dear to part withall for the ſervice and advance-

ment

ment thereof, this is noble Grace: when a man has high and paramount affections to the name of God and Chriſt, loving and preferring it infinitely before all his own intereſts and concerns, being ready to be, do, or ſuffer any thing for the ſervice on't: Oh what Grace is this! ſuch Grace ſome of the Saints have attained to. *Lord* (ſayes *Moſes* concerning *Iſrael*) *if thou wilt, forgive their ſin, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou haſt written*, Exod. 32. 32. What is here meant by the Book which God has written, I ſhall not now ſtand to enquire or determine; but to be content to be blotted out on't, was to be ſure a great piece of ſelf-denyal; and this *Moſes* was, you ſee, rather then that the people ſhould be utterly deſtroyed; and all becauſe he knew how much the glory of God was concerned, and would ſuffer by their deſtruction, as appears by comparing this verſe with verſe the 12; the ſum (as one obſerves) is, that *Moſes prefers the glory of God before his own ſalvation, whoſe glory was conjoyned with* Iſraels *preſervation, in reſpect of the promiſes made to the Fathers, and in reſpect of*

Præfert Moſes ſaluti ſuæ, gloriam Dei, quæ cum ſalute Iſraelis conjuncta erat, reſpectu promiſſionum Patribus factarum, & blaſphemiarum quæ Ægyptii & alii adverſus Deum evomere parati erant. Willet. in loc.

of the blaſphemies which the Egyptians *and other adverſaries, were ready to belch out againſt God, ſhould he deſtroy them:* Such Grace was found alſo in *John Baptiſt*, in the place lately mentioned, *Jo.* 3. *latter end*, who was content Chriſt ſhould raiſe himſelf out of his abaſement; ſuch Grace was found in Chriſt, who preferred his Fathers glory before his own life, *Jo.* 12. 27, 28. ſuch Grace was found in *Paul*, who was *willing not only to be bound, but even to dye for the ſake of Chriſt*, Acts 21. 13. for the name, the honour of Chriſt: Chriſts honour was ſo dear to him, that he could be content to dye to ſerve it, he preferr'd it before his life. O, my beloved, when a ſoul ſhall be ſo ſwallowed up with love and zeal to the glory of God, and the intereſt of Chriſt in the world, as that his own intereſts are in a manner overlook'd and forgotten by him; when to ſee the name of God exalted ſhall be a mans greateſt triumph, and to ſee it debaſed ſhall be his greateſt trouble; when his practical language ſhall be ſuch as this: Father, here I am, which way ſoever thy glory lyes, I am ready to ſerve thee in it, 'tis honour enough

enough for me to honour God, 'tis happineſs enough for me to glorifie God; and therefore let God do with me, and let him call me to do whatever he will in order thereunto: let him, if he pleaſes, eclipſe my name, and throw my glory in the duſt, ſo be it, he will thereby raiſe his own name, and brighten his own glory; let him, if he pleaſes, make me a footſtool, and let me be trampled upon, ſo be it, he will advance himſelf into the throne thereby; let me dye, if his will be ſo, that his glory may live; whatever becomes of me, though I ſhould be ſtript of all, though my name and intereſt ſhould rot, yet let God be magnified, let God have honour in the world, and let the intereſt and Kingdom of Chriſt proſper, 'tis enough, I am ſatisfied; when, I ſay, 'tis thus with a ſoul, this ſpeaks noble Grace indeed. Oh preſs after ſuch Grace, the more you love the name of God and Chriſt, the fitter you are either to live or dye.

10. For a man not only to be willing to ſuffer, but alſo to rejoyce in ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel, for a man chearfully to take up the

Croſs for Chriſt, and to look upon it as his crown and glory, as an honour and preferment to him, this alſo is an high ſtrain of Grace, and is greatly pleaſing to God: the Croſs, my Beloved, in it ſelf is *a black ſowre Crab-tree*, (as one calls it) but though ſuch in it ſelf; yet as 'tis borne for the ſake of Chriſt, and ſo his Croſs, 'tis an honour and not a reproach, a Crown of glory, a Royal Diadem upon the head of a poor creature: *to you its given on the behalf of Chriſt to ſuffer for his ſake*, Phil. 1. 29. ſufferings for Chriſt are a noble, royal, honourable gift, more honourable then the Crowns and Kingdoms of this world: a Priſon for Chriſt, is more honourable then the ſtateliest Palaces of the greateſt Princes: bonds for Chriſt, are more honourable then ropes of Pearl, or Diamonds: now when a ſoul ſhall look on theſe things as ſuch, and accordingly rejoyce in them, this is noble Grace indeed, ſuch Grace was found in the Diſciples, *Acts* 5. 41. *who rejoyced*, or as the word is, leapt for joy, *that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Chriſt*; or as the words may be rendered, that they were honoured

noured to be diſhonour'd for Chriſt. So the *Apoſtle* and his Brethren, *Rom.* 5 3. *we glory in tribulation*; and *I rejoyce* (ſayes *Paul*) *in reproaches, neceſſities, and perſecutions for Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 12. 10. So thoſe worthies *Heb.* 10. 34. who *took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods*: this Chriſt calls for, *Mat.* 5. 12. *rejoyce and be exceeding glad, when men perſecute you for my ſake*: and again, *count it all joy when you fall into divers afflictions*, &c. *Jam.* 1. 12. 'tis admirable to think, how ſome of the Saints both in former and latter times have gloried in the Croſs of Chriſt, and even longed for it. *Luther* longed for the honour of Martyrdom, and was ready even to envy thoſe that were called to it, when he was not; writing to ſome of his acquaintance in bonds for Chriſt and the Goſpel, he breaks out into this complaint: *O miſerable me, who have been firſt in teaching theſe things, but laſt and perhaps never worthy to be a partaker of your bonds and fires.* Oh labour for ſuch Grace: we think it much, if we be content to ſuffer, but we ſhould rejoyce in ſufferings, glory in the Croſs, carry our ſelves under ſufferings for Chriſt, as looking

Me miſerum, qui primus iſta docuiſſe jactor, & noviſſimus & fortè nunquam veſtrorum vinculorum & ignium particeps eſſe dignus ſum. M. Adam in vit. Luth.

looking upon them to be (for ſo indeed they are) an honour and priviledge to us.

11. For a man in a proſperous condition, all things going ſmoothly with him in the world, to be willing to looſe Anchor, and be gone hence to Heaven; yea for a man to long, and long earneſtly for a diſſolution, that he might be with Chriſt, fully and for ever with him, this is noble Grace. Sirs, take a man whoſe mountain of proſperity ſtands ſtrong, whoſe paths are as it were ſtrewed with Roſes, the Roſes of creature-contentments, who has all that heart can wiſh of this worlds good, the ſtreams running pleaſantly on each hand of him; for ſuch an one in ſuch a condition to long, and long earneſtly to be gone to his dear Lord, that ſo he may be fully like him, and may ſee him as he is, that he may be eternally in his preſence, ſwallow'd up in the love, praiſes, and admirations of him, be a perfect partaker of his life and image, this is great and glorious Grace: when though a mans condition in the world be every way ſuch, as that he may well ſay, *'tis good to be here*, yet the daily pulſe of his ſoul

ſoul is that of the Spouſe, *Cant.* 8. 14. *make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like a Roe or a young Hart upon the mountains of Spires*; make haſte to fetch me hence to Heaven, this is noble Grace, and that which every one does not come up unto: indeed when we are in affliction, and our lives are bitter to us by reaſon of many and great tryals, difficulties, and temptations, then many are willing to be gone; but this is ſo far from noble Grace, that this may be where there is no Grace at all: but when the Sun ſhines upon our Tabernacle, and ſets not, when we live in a Paradiſe of earthly comforts and contentments, then to pant and long to be gone to be with Chriſt, then to ſuſpire and breathe after the other world, and with an holy impatiency to look out for it, this is glorious Grace, Grace that carries an heavenly odour and ſavour with it. Thus I have mentioned ſome of thoſe more noble and excellent ſtrains of Grace for your imitation, which I would have you to labour to come up unto; and the more you come up to theſe, the more fit you are to live, and the more ready you are to dye.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Wherein further directions are laid down in order to the ſetting of things right, and making all ready for a dying hour.

Seventhly, WOuld you indeed have all things right and in order, before a dying hour comes? then be diligent and faithfull in the work of God, that work, which God in a particular manner hath given you to do: we have all our work to do, and that given us of God; we have general work, and ſpecial work.

Firſt, We have general work to do, the work of our Chriſtian calling, the work of our Salvation, which we are commanded *to work out with fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. the work of Faith, and the labour of Love, the work of Mortification, Self-denyal, and the like. We have alſo,

Secondly, Special work to do, the work of our particular ſtations and places; work that is incumbent upon us, as we ſtand thus and thus related, being Magiſtrates, or Miniſters, the Maſters

Maſters of Families, or the like: for all ſuch relations bring their work and duty with them, and this indeed is properly our own work, and this we ſhould be diligent and faithful in, as ever we would be found ready for a dying hour: *Paul* had his work to do, and he was diligent and faithful in the diſcharge of it; which gave him comfort, when he came to dye, 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs*, &c. He had been faithful in the diſcharge of his work, while he lived; and being now to dye, he found the comfort and ſweetneſs of it: yea this was that, which our Lord himſelf comforted himſelf withall, when he was to dye, and in the ſence of it, goes to his Father with boldneſs for his glory, *John* 17. 4. *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do*; indeed he had a great deal of work given him by the Father, and he was faithful, and punctual in the diſcharge of it all; which was a comfort to him, now he was to dye: and he himſelf

himſelf tells us, *that is the bleſſed ſervant, whom when his Lord ſhall come, ſhall find ſo doing*; that is, faithful and diligent in the diſcharge of his proper work, *Mat.* 24. 46. Truly this is the poſture, which ſome (though but a few) are found in, they make conſcience to diſcharge the duty that is incumbent upon them; they ſay with their Lord, *I muſt work the work of him that ſent me, while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work*, John 9. 4. they ſee a Night coming, Death coming, Judgment coming, Eternity coming; and accordingly they deſire to lay out their whole ſouls in the work of God, to live up to the Laws of Chriſt in every relation; and they look upon that day as loſt, wherein they have not done ſomewhat for God and their own ſouls: and how comfortably may ſuch look death in the face, when it comes? I have read the Life of an Holy Miniſter, who was ſeized upon by ſickneſs, which was unto death, while he was preaching the everlaſting Goſpel; and lying a few dayes ſick, ere he dyed, a Fellow-Labourer of his, another Holy Miniſter, coming to viſit him, and ſeeing death in his face,

cryed

cryed out in ſome paſſion, *O dear Sir, are you going to Heaven from us?* to whom he replyed, *Yes, and I bleſs God, that my Maſter found me in his work*: Truly, might a man have his choice and option, he would have death to find him, while he is ingaged in the work of God. Oh ſtudy your own work: ſtudy the work and duty of your Chriſtian calling: ſtudy that work and duty, which is incumbent upon you in your particular relations, and beg of God a heart, to be diligent in the diſcharge of one and the other.

Eighthly, Would you indeed have all right, and in order, in the matters of your ſouls, ere a dying hour comes? then be ſure to ſuffer no diſtance, no eſtrangement to grow up between God and you; but labour to keep up a conſtant, and intimate acquaintance with him, *Acquaint thy ſelf with God, and be at peace*, Job 22. 21. the more of an holy intimacy and acquaintance with God we maintain; the more we are at peace in our ſelves: and I am ſure, the more we are at peace in our ſelves, the more ready we are for a dying hour: Woe and alas for us! how oft do we let fall

fall our converſe and communion with God, aud ſuffer ſad diſtances and eſtrangements to grow up between him and us? and indeed (my Beloved) it is a ſad and amazing thing, to think how ſuddenly and imperceptibly diſtances and eſtrangements will grow up between God and a mans ſoul: for my own part ſhould I have heard of it only by the hearing of the ear, and had not found it by too many ſad and woful experiences; I could not have believed, how ſuddenly and imperceptibly diſtances and eſtrangements will grow up between God and a mans ſoul, yea and that after the neareſt, livelieſt, and moſt intimate acquaintance and communion with him: which calls upon us, to be very watchful and circumſpect as to this thing; and (my Beloved) as you would dye with boldneſs and comfort; let me adviſe, and perſwade you, to give all diligence, to keep up conſtant intercourſe and acquaintance with God, and watch narrowly againſt all diſtances between him and you. Which of us, that knows any thing of the things of God, knows not, that we ſuffer diſtances and eſtrangements to grow up between God

God and us, we cannot tell how, with any tolerable boldneſs or comfort to look him in the face in a duty, or ſcarce to think of him with delight? much leſs ſhall we be able, to look him in the face with comfort in death; in caſe we ſuffer diſtances to grow up between him and us; moreover, take this for a ſure rule, that the more you are verſed in comunion with God, and do maintain an holy intimacy and correſpondence with him, the more boldneſs, and comfort you will have, when you come to die: Then you will be able to ſay, I am now going to be, and live for ever, immediately with that God, with whom I have lived in much ſweet, and intimate comunion here: I am now going to converſe more fully with him in Heaven, with whom, I have enjoyed much ſweet converſe here on Earth; ſhould death find a man under diſtances, and eſtrangements between God and him, it muſt neceſſarily be uncomfortably unto him; but when there is an holy intimacy kept up between God and the ſoul; then the ſoul need not fear, or be aſhamed, to look death and Judgement both in the face, *Little Chil-*

dren, ſaith *John*, *abide in him, that when he ſhall appear we may have boldneſs, and not be aſhamed, before him at his coming*, 1 John 2. 28. We are put into Chriſt by Faith at our firſt Converſion; and we abide in him by after acts of faith and comunion; and this abiding in him is the way to have boldneſs before him at his coming: therefore mind this, and pray much about this; take heed of diſtances growing up between God and you, and labour to have thoſe ſweet viſits, thoſe ſweet intercourſes of love, thoſe bleſſed acts of communion kept up between God and you, that are wont to be kept up between him and his watchful, cloſe-walking Saints, and in order hereunto, take three or four ſhort hints.

First, Look upon and eſteem converſe and comunion with God, to be (as indeed it is) your higheſt happineſs both here and in heaven; the higheſt happineſs ſouls are capable of here, is to live in converſe and communion with God, in ſuch wayes, as are ſuitable to this preſent ſtate; and the higheſt happineſs ſouls are capable of eternally in heaven, is to live in the Divine preſence, and to ſee Gods face continually and to

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lodge for ever in the boſom of his love: we may run out to a thouſand things, and when we have done all; this will be the higheſt, and indeed the only happineſs of ſouls, (*viz.*) to converſe with God, and to enjoy comunion with God; and they that miſs of this, will miſs of all happineſs for ever; accordingly we ſhould prize it, and preſs after it: we ſhould account all things, as nothing on this ſide God and comunion with God in Chriſt: the Saints of old have done ſo; *Many*, ſaith *David*, *will ſay, who will ſhew us any good? but Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*, Pſal. 4. 6. as if he ſhould ſay, while others are ſeeking their happineſs from carnal, and earthly enjoyments, Corn, Wine, and Oyl; the happineſs we deſire is thy love, thy favour, the beamings out of the light of thy countenance upon our ſouls: So *Pſal.* 39. 7. *Now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee*; I have done with the ſtreams, as if he ſhould ſay, and I deſire to cleave wholly to the fountain; I have done with the creatures, of which I have formerly been too fond; and I would now take up

my whole reſt, ſolace, and ſatisfaction in thy ſelf alone: and alſo *Pſal.* 73. 25, 26. *Whom have I in heaven, but thee? and there is none on earth I deſire in compariſon of thee; my heart and my fleſh faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever:* The ſame ſpirit dwelt and acted in *Auſtin*, *All fulneſs and plenty* (ſaith he) *which is not my God, is want and poverty*: and again elſewhere, *Thou Lord, art my God, my happineſs, and unto thee, and after thee, do I breath and ſuſpire day and night*: O (my Beloved) did we indeed prize comunion with God more, we ſhould live more in comunion with him; and this take for a certain truth, that it will never be well with us indeed, till we ſee all in God, and account we enjoy all happineſs, in enjoying comunion with him.

Omnis mihi copia quæ Deus meus non eſt, egeſtas eſt. Aug.

O æterna veritas & vera charitas, & chara æternitas: tu es Deus meus tibi ſuſpiro die ac nocte. Id.

Secondly, In the cloſe of every day take a ſerious view of, and diligently conſider, what hath paſſed between God and you, what tranſactions there have been between God and your ſouls that day: there doth not a day paſs, wherein there do not many things paſs between God and his people; and he that would

would prevent diſtances and eſtrangements between God and him, ſhould ſeriouſly ponder, and lay to heart, what hath paſſed between God and his ſoul, what tranſactions there have been between God and him that day. On the one hand ponder and conſider, what hath paſſed from God to you, and what his carriages towards you have been, what approaches he hath made to you, what intimations of love, what overtures of comunion, what diſcoveries of himſelf and his glory; how far and in what way God hath been dealing with your ſpirits, convincing, inlightening, quickening, or comforting of them, what calls he hath given you, what myrrhe he hath dropped upon the handle of the Lock, what taſts you have had of his ſweetneſs, and Grace, what holy impreſſions he hath made upon you, and the like. On the other hand, ponder and conſider, what hath paſſed from you to God, and what your carriages toward him have been, what reception, and entertainment you have given him, making his approaches to you; what value you have put upon his preſence, and the intimations of his

love; how far you have embraced and improved the overtures, he made you of farther comunion with him; what awe there hath been upon you of his holineſs, and his all-ſeeing eye; what out-goings of heart there have been found within you after him; what breathings of love, what holy longings and deſires, what ſpringings and workings of ſpiritual joy, and delight of ſoul to him, and in him; what place he hath had in your thoughts and contemplations; how far you have lived to him, and upon him; wherein you may have either grieved or delighted his ſpirit, and the like. Thus, in the cloſe of every day ponder and conſider, what hath paſſed between God and you, and accordingly deport and demean your ſelves before him; wherein you have failed, or been defective in any thing, in order to keeping up comunion between God and you, be humbled, and ſet all right by Faith and Prayer; adore God in his acts of Grace and condeſcention, (as to be ſure, you will find cauſe to do) and loath your ſelves, for any acts of ſin or unkindneſs, undutifulneſs or diſreſpect, that you have

have been guilty of towards God: O this would be a bleſſed courſe indeed, to prevent diſtances and eſtrangements between God and you; this *David* calls *a communing with his own heart*, and injoyns it as a duty of the higheſt importance; *ſtand in awe and ſin not, commune with your hearts and be ſtill*, Pſal. 4. 4. it is what he lived in the practice of, *Pſalm.* 77. 6, (if he were the Author of that Pſalm) *I communed with my own heart, and my Spirit made diligent ſearch.* O be punctual in this work.

Thirdly, Be much converſant, and that with all ſpiritual diligence, in the wayes and duties of comunion; thoſe ways and duties, wherein God is wont to meet his people, and maintain converſe and comunion with them; and in all of them wait for God and his approaches to you: there are thoſe which we may call ways and duties of comunion; wayes and duties, wherein God and his people do hold converſe with each other; wherein God viſits and communicates himſelf unto his people; and wherein his people may be ſaid to viſit God, and make out after God; and theſe are the uſe of the Word and Sacraments, the exerciſe of Prayer, Meditation, Self-

examination, and the like: Now as ever you would prevent the growing up of diſtances and eſtrangements between God and you, ſee that you are much converſant in theſe; and that with a holy and ſpiritual diligence, waiting for God, and the manifeſtations of God to your ſouls in them; theſe are the galleries, wherein Chriſt and his people do take ſweet turns together; the green beds, wherein they lie down in the boſom of each others love; therefore keep up a conſtant and diligent attendance on God in theſe; and in all your attendances on him, look after converſe with him, let it be your ſolemn aim to converſe with him, and ſee his face, to have a viſit, a ſmile, a deſcent of love from him; I do ſuppoſe you to be ſuch, as do, and will attend on publick Ordinances, and wait for God there, as they waited for the Spirit at *Jeruſalem*: That only then, which I would preſs you to, in this preſent caſe, ſhall be to be much converſant in Prayer and Meditation between God and your own ſouls; in theſe two great duties, of comunion with God, ſecret Prayer and Meditation, Oh the loſs, as to comnnion with God, that we expoſe our ſelves unto, by being

being no more in Prayer and holy Meditation! the holy Ones of old, and thoſe that have been men of the higheſt comunion with God, have alſo been men of much Prayer and great Meditation; as I might inſtance, in *David*, and *Daniel*, and others: and indeed their comunion with God, came in, and was kept up this way: God (you know) hath told us, *the prayer of the upright is his delight*, Prov. 15. 8. and Chriſt beſpeaks the prayer of his Spouſe, as moſt pleaſing and delightful to him, *Cant.* 2. 14. *O my Dove! that art in the clefts of the rock, in the ſecret places of the ſtairs: let me ſee thy countenance, and hear thy voice; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely*; as if he ſhould ſay, approach to me in ſecret prayer, I will aſſure thee it will be moſt ſweet and pleaſant to me; and as he thus delights in the prayers of his people, ſo he will ſurely delight them in their prayers with the viſits of his Love, and communications of his Grace, the beamings out of his Glory to and upon their ſouls: he hath promiſed, to *make them joyful in the houſe of prayer*; yea he hath promiſed, to perform the whole Grace of

of the New Covenant in anſwer to their Prayers, *Ezek.* 36. 37. Oh the great things God doth for his people, and the ſweet comunion that is kept up between him and them, in a way of Prayer! I remember a ſaying of one, *He that is not much in Prayer, will never be a man of much excellency*; and I may as truly ſay, he that is not much in Prayer, is never like to be a man of much comunion with God. And ſo for Meditation: Oh how ſweet, how Heaven-like a duty is that! Oh how much of God is let out many times, to the ſouls of his people herein! *David* experienced this, *Pſal.* 63. 5, 6. *my ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs; and my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches*: while he was converſant in this duty of Meditation, his ſoul was filled with joy and ſatisfaction, as with marrow and fatneſs: again ſaith he, *my meditation of thee ſhall be ſweet*, Pſal. 104. 34. Oh be much and frequent with God in theſe wayes and duties of comunion.

Fourthly, Give Chriſt his due place and

and honour, in all your makings out after comunion with God: *Joſeph* told his Brethren, *they ſhould not ſee his face, unleſs they brought their brother* Benjamin *with them*: and truly you are not like to ſee the face of God, in any of the forementioned wayes and duties; unleſs you bring Chriſt with you; and give him his due place and honour therein; that is to ſay, unleſs you eye him, and act Faith upon him, as the only way and medium of comunion with God: Chriſt beſpeaks this at our hands, while he tells us, *I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me*, John 14. 6. and by his Blood it is, that we have a way opened to us into the Holy of Holieſt, acceſs for our perſons and prayers into the Divine preſence, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. Yea not only has he purchaſed a liberty, and opened a way for us to approach into the preſence of God; but having done this, by his Mediation and Interceſſion it is, that any of us come to God; hence he is ſaid, *to ſave to the very uttermoſt, all that come to God by him, ſeeing he ever lives to make interceſſion for us*, Heb. 7. 25. indeed were it not for Chriſt,

Chriſt, none of us could ever hope, to ſee the face of God and live; none of us could ever hope to ſee one ſmile of Gods face, one embrace of his boſom any the leaſt deſcent and emanation of love from him; were it not for Chriſt, when we come unto God, we ſhould find him to be a conſuming fire, and when he and our ſouls did meet, it would be as the meeting of devouring fire, and withered ſtubble: in a word, all communications of Grace and Love from God to us, are by and through Chriſt; and all the love, the duty, the homage we tender to God; muſt be all tendered to him by and through Chriſt; if ever we find acceptation with him: have Chriſt therefore in your eye in all your approaches unto God, as him, *by whom we have acceſs unto the Father*, Epheſ. 2. 18. let the real language of your ſouls be, if I have any one ſmile from God, it muſt be upon the account of Chriſt; if he ſheweth himſelf pacified towards me, it muſt be through his Blood, if he gives out any grace, any favour, any bleſſing to me, it will be upon the ſole account of his Mediation; if ever either my perſon, or ſervices be accepted of the Lord,

Lord, it muſt be in and through this Mediator: moreover, how great ſoever the diſtance between God and my ſoul is, yet Chriſt can bring me nigh unto him; and however unworthy of, or unſuitable to comunion with God I am in my ſelf, yet ſuch is his well-pleaſedneſs in Chriſt, that well-beloved Son of his, that I will hope through him to find Grace in his ſight, and to be lodged in the boſom of his Love: Thus put all the honour upon Chriſt, that is due to him in this buſineſs; this is what is pleaſing to the Father: and the more you thus honour him, the fuller and more conſtant, will your converſe and comunion with God be.

Ninthly, Would you indeed have all right, and in order for a dying hour? would you be ready for that laſt and great work? then live wholly and conſtantly upon Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, for your juſtification and acceptati n with God, both living and dying: the more we live out of our ſelves upon Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, for juſtification and acceptation with God; the more ready poſture we are in for a dying hour: this indeed is the main thing,

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and when we have done all that ever we can, to deck and adorn our ſelves with Grace, and gracious diſpoſitions; ſtill we muſt live out of our ſelves, and out of all thoſe ornaments, upon the naked righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for Juſtification and Salvation: This is that which the Scripture calls the readineſs of the Lambs wife, *Rev.* 19. 7, 8. *Let us be glad and rejoyce, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made her ſelf ready*: and wherein that readineſs lay, the next words tell you; *to her was granted, to be clothed with fine linen, clean and white; which fine linen, is the righteouſneſs of the Saints*; that is, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to the Saints through believing; this is the *beſt robe*, mentioned *Luke* 15. 22. a robe indeed, which covers all our nakedneſs, that beautifies and adorns us, and renders us moſt amiable in Gods eye: whatſoever ſpots and blemiſhes, whatever failings, or defects may be upon us, yet theſe are not ſeen, while God looks upon us, as clothed with the righteouſneſs of his Son; and we by Faith do live upon that righteouſneſs, as the ſole matter of our juſtification

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and acceptation with him: and let me tell you, the more clear, and diſtinct the actings of our Faith are, in carrying us out of our ſelves, and all ſelf-righteouſneſs, and relying wholly on Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; the more ready and comfortable poſture we are in for a dying hour: this was the great thing *Paul* coveted, and preſſed after to the very laſt, and which he accounted all things but dung for, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. *I count all things but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him; not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is by the Law, but the righteouſneſs of Faith, the righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith*; he dreaded the thoughts of being found in any thing of his own; he trembled to think of ſtanding upon his own bottom, the bottom of his own worth and righteouſneſs, when he ſhould come to dye; and he cleaved intirely unto, and relyed wholly upon Chriſt, and his moſt perfect righteouſneſs: Oh let me tell you, *Paul* had as much, and perhaps more to have reſted upon, then ten thouſand of us; for gifts, for graces, for priviledges, for ſervices, for ſucceſſes, for ſufferings for Chriſt, he went beyond

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ἓν τοῦτο φόβερον ἦν μόνον, τὸ περσκρῦσαι θεῷ, &c.

any meer man, that ever lived; and *Chryſoſtom* obſerves of him, that he feared nothing but ſin; to diſpleaſe God, and to diſhonour him, was the only thing that was terrible to him; and the Scripture gives a large and frequent account of his other attainments: but ſtill he goeth out of all, and his language is, none but Chriſt, none but Chriſt; not but that alſo he preſſed after the greateſt eminency and exactneſs in holineſs, as you find in the following verſes of this 3*d.* to the *Philippians:* and indeed this is the true Spirit of the Goſpel, to preſs after the greateſt eminency and exactneſs in holineſs; to covet to attain, if poſſible, unto Angelical holineſs: and yet under, and after all, to live ſingly and intirely on a naked Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, for juſtification and acceptation with God; and the more you come to, and live in this Spirit; the more ready you are for Death and a bleſſed Eternity: this was a great part of the ground of the Churches rejoycing, *Iſa.* 61. 10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of ſalvation, and hath*

hath covered me with a robe of righteouſneſs: which *Chryſoſtom* and others, both Antient and Modern, interpret of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: and indeed no greater ground of rejoycing, to a man or woman, whether living or dying, then to be clothed with the robe of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: I ſhall only put you in mind of a ſaying, I have heard from a holy man, the day before he dyed; *My Friends*, ſaith he, (ſpeaking to my ſelf and others) *I have walked with God theſe thirty years, and have enjoyed a good meaſure of the aſſurance of his love: but now that I am come to dye, I do not place my comfort on any of all theſe; but on the infinite ſatisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt*: Oh there, there, when we have done all, we muſt lay the weight and ſtreſs, of our Souls, Comfort, Salvation, and all: and therefore be ſure you live out of your ſelves upon Chriſt: it is a great ſaying *Luther* hath to this purpoſe, *Lord Jeſus* (ſaith he) *thou art my righteouſneſs, and I am thy ſin: thou tookeſt mine*, (meaning his ſin) *and thou gaveſt me thine*, (meaning his righteouſneſs:) *thou tookeſt that which thou waſt not, and thou gaveſt me that which*

Tu Domine Jeſu es juſtitia mea, ego ſum peccatum tuum: tu adſumpſiſti meum & dediſti mihi tuum adſumpſiſti quod non eras, & dediſti mihi quod non eram. Luth. de juſtitia noſtra.

which I was not : intending the exchange, that Chriſt had made with him, giving him his righteouſneſs, for his ſin: Oh let this be the language of our ſouls to Chriſt; ſo ſhall we be found ready, when a dying hour comes.

Tenthly, Would you indeed dye with comfort? then beg God to ſtand by you, and give you actual Grace in a dying hour; and make it one of your great works, to treaſure up many Prayers for this before hand: when you have done all, ſhould God withdraw his preſence, and the influences of his Grace and Love from you, when you come to dye; Death would be in a great meaſure uncomfortable to you: but if God will be with you; if God will ſtand by you; if he will vouchſafe you the influences and communications of his Grace in a dying hour: then how will your ſouls triumph over death? this indeed will ſweeten death: they are great words of *David* in *Pſal.* 23. 4. *though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me*: having the preſence of God with him, he was not, he would not be afraid, even in the very valley of the ſhadow of death:

death: truly without the preſence of God, we cannot live comfortably; whatſoever our attainments in Grace have been; yet if God withdraw his preſence from us, we can do nothing; we can bear nothing; we cannot perform the leaſt duty; we cannot reſiſt the leaſt temptation; we cannot grapple with the leaſt corruption; nor carry through, as we ought, the leaſt difficulty: much leſs ſhall we be able to dye with comfort, if God withdraw: therefore, I ſay, beg God to ſtand by you in a dying hour; let it be your daily prayer to God,

Firſt, That he would be with you in the difficulties of life.

Secondly, That he would not leave you in the conflicts and agonies of death: and indeed we ſhould not paſs that day, wherein we do not treaſure up one prayer for this before hand; and thus doing, God will not leave us, God will not fail us, in that laſt and great difficulty; at leaſt he will not leave us in point of Grace: our Lord himſelf was left in the agonies of death by the Father in point of comfort, which put him to that out-cry, *Why haſt thou forſaken me?* but he was not left by him

in point of Grace; ſtill a Spirit of Faith and Holineſs acted him; and therefore though forſaken, he cryes out, *my God, my God*: if poſſibly, in conformity to our Head, we ſhould be left in that hour in point of Comfort; yet if we carry our ſelves, as we ought; we ſhall not be left in point of Grace: and if we be not left in point of Grace, all will do well, though not ſo ſweet and joyous with us, as otherwiſe it would be. And thus I have given you, theſe more particular directions, in order to a preparation for a dying hour; which if you live up to, you may not only live above the fear of death, but alſo in the joyful expectation thereof daily.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Being a Conſolatory Concluſion of the whole Diſcourſe containing encouragements againſt the fear of death unto all ſuch as are found in the practiſe of the foregoing directions.

NOw for a Concluſion of the whole matter, upon all that hath been declared, Soul, let me ask thee one queſtion: doſt thou indeed ſee thy particular concern in this buſineſs; ſo ſee it as really to make it thy great work and ſolicitude while living, to ſet all things right, and make all things ready for a dying hour? ſome there are, that are ſo happy, as ſo to do; and art thou one of them? then why ſhouldſt thou fear death? yea why ſhouldſt thou not exult, and thy heart leap within thee in the ſight and thoughts of its approach? true it is a dark entry, but it leads to a fair and ſtately palace, even the Fathers houſe: 'tis a rough and difficult paſſage; but it ſets thee ſafe on ſhore in a large and a fat land: true it carries with it ſomewhat a black, lowring, and ghaſtly aſpect to nature; and na-

ture may at firſt poſſibly be ſtartled, and recoile at the ſight of it : but open the eye of thy faith, and behold it, in the glaſs of the Goſpel, view it in the death of thy Lord and Head, and it will not appear half ſo terrible; yea, thou wilt find it to be not ſo much an enemy as a friend; not as a king of Terrours, but rather as a King of Comforts; not as an object to be dreaded and trembled at, but rather to be rejoyced in, and triumphed over by thee : it will appear to be not loſs but gain : *For me to die is gain*, ſayes *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 21. yea it will be thy great gain, 'twill be the period of all thy miſery, and the perfecting of all thy happineſs; and the truth is, we are never perfectly happy, till death comes : but for thy further encouragement, I ſhall in a few particulars ſhew you, what Death come when it will, doth and will do for ſuch, as make all ready for its coming.

1. Death when ever it comes, will tranſlate thee, thou ready ſoul, from Earth to Heaven, from a ſtrange land to thine own home and Fathers houſe: and will not this be a kindneſs? as for this world, what is it to the poor Saints

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but a ſtrange land? 'tis Heaven is their home and Country: hence they have confeſt, and do *confeſs themſelves to be Pilgrims and Strangers upon earth*, Heb. 11. 13. and the *Pſalmiſt*, in the words immediately foregoing my text, *Pſalm* 39. 12. owns it to God, *I am a Sojourner and a Stranger here*: yea, this world is not onely a ſtrange land, but a waſte howling wilderneſs to ſuch, wherein they live among wild Beaſts, Lyons, Bears, Wolves, Tygers, and the like: Luſts within, and Devils without, ready daily to devour them: but now when Death comes, that carries them off from this ſtrange land, this waſte howling wilderneſs to their own home and countrey, which is Heaven; yea to their Fathers houſe, there to live with him, to enjoy his preſence, and to adore his grace. *We know*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *that when our Earthly houſe of this Tabernacle* (ſpeaking of the body) *ſhall be diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1, And you know how Chriſt ſpeaks to his Diſciples, Joh. 14. 2. *In my Fathers houſe are many Manſions, if it were not ſo I would have told you*, and thi-

ther does death carry you when it comes; Oh ſweet! O my Beloved, to go home, to go to our Fathers houſe, and to poſſeſs our Manſion there, that Manſion, which our dear Lord and Head is gone before to prepare for us, how ſweet is this to think of? and how many deaths may it ſweeten? Suppoſe one of you were ſome thouſand miles diſtant from your home, Country, and Comforts, and you were in a waſte, howling Wilderneſs among Lyons and Bears, ready to devour you, a wide Sea alſo being between home and you; and ſuppoſe withall that a Ship ſhould come and take you into her, and in a Short time ſet you down in your own Country, and among all your friends and Comforts, would not this be a kindneſs? why this is your caſe here, O ye preparing Souls, and this is the kindneſs death does for you, when it comes: while here, you are ten thouſand miles diſtant from your home and country, your friends and comforts, and in a waſte howling Wilderneſs; but death, that ſwift Sailer, comes, and in a moment, ſets you down in heaven, your home and country, O how welcome ſhould it then be to you.

2. Death

2. Death, whenever it comes, will carry thee from trouble to reſt, from a tempeſtuous Sea to a quiet Haven, there to lye at an eternal Anchor in the boſom of thy ſweet Lord. This world ever was, and (for any thing I know) ever will be a place of trouble to the people of God: ſure I am, Chriſt hath told us, *in the world you ſhall have tribulation*, *Jo.* 16. 33. and who of us does not find it made good? this world is a tempeſtuous Sea, wherein the waves lift up themſelves, and the poor Saints are *afflicted and toſſed with tempeſts*, and oftentimes *not comforted*, *Iſa.* 54. 11. we read in *Jon.* 1. 13. that *the Sea wrought and was tempeſtuous*, *and the Mariners were fain to row hard to get the ſhip to ſhore*: and truly thus 'tis often in the caſe in hand, the Sea of this world is tempeſtuous, it works, and the poor Saints are fain to row hard to get ſafe to ſhore: yea as we read *Acts* 27. 14. that *an Euroclydon*, *a tempeſtuous eaſt-wind aroſe and beat upon* Paul, *and others in the ſhip with him*, which was ready to break all in pieces: ſo truly the Saints in this world do meet with Euroclydons, tempeſtuous winds not a few,

few, which beat upon them, and are ready to ſplit all and ſink all; but now, when death comes, thoſe ſtorms are all made a calm, and they (I mean the Saints) are brought into the deſired Haven: death ſets them at reſt, 'tis indeed their diſmiſſion to reſt, *there*, ſayes *Job*, (ſpeaking of the Grave) *the weary be at reſt*, Job 3. 17. Death ſends the body to reſt, it frees it from all ſenſible ſufferings: when death comes, thy weak body, thy ſick body, thy pained body, thy conſumptive body ſhall have its diſmiſſion to reſt; and death ſends the Soul to reſt, that reſts in God and with God: *bleſſed are the dead, which dye in the Lord, henceforth they reſt from their labours*, Rev. 14. 13. and you have, I think, both together in one Scripture, *Iſa.* 57. 2. where ſpeaking of the righteous, 'tis ſaid, *they ſhall enter into peace, they ſhall reſt in their beds.* Hence we read that *there remaineth a reſt to the people of God*, Heb. 4. 9. indeed it remains, 'tis not here; but when death comes, that ſets them down in this remaining reſt. Oh what a kindneſs muſt this be? reſt, O how ſweet is reſt? how deſirable is reſt? and reſt too

after

after long and hard labour and trouble? how ſweet is reſt to the labouring man, that hath wrought hard all the day? how ſweet is reſt to the weary traveller, that hath gone a long and dirty journey? how ſweet is reſt to the ſolicitous Mariner, and how welcome is the Harbour to him, eſpecially after having been long toſs'd and beaten with ſtorms and tempeſts? and how ſweet will reſt be to the poor, troubled, tempted, labouring, travelling Saint, whoſe whole life has been little elſe but trouble, labour, and ſore travel; who here could ſcarce all his dayes find a reſting place for the ſole of his foot; the world as to him being covered with a deluge?

3 Death, whenever it comes, will turn your conflicts into victory, this *Aceldama* or field of blood, (for ſuch is this world) into a mount of triumph, and a throne of glory. What is this world but an *Aceldama*, a field of blood to the poor Saints? ſure I am this life is little elſe but a perpetual war and conflict, with luſts, with Devils, with afflictions, and with temptations; hence 'tis called *a fight*, *a warfare*, and the like:

and

and the enemies which they in this warfare have to grapple with, are formidable enemies: *we wreſtle not*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *with fleſh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſſes*, Eph. 6. 12, 13. we wreſtle not with fleſh and blood, that is, with men, or any thing that is frail and weak, no, we have more potent and formidable enemies to deal withall, we wreſtle and conflict with Devils, who are potent, ſubtile, and indefatigable: *Enemies* (as *Calvin* obſerves upon the place) *which wound before they appear, and kill before they are ſeen: enemies which deal not only by force and power, but who are dreadfully crafty and ſubtile, yea enemies which have fiery darts to caſt at us*, as afterwards he ſpeaks: and for my own part I think, it were well for us over what it is, if theſe were the worſt enemies we had to grapple and conflict withall, but there are legions of luſts within, (which I look upon to be worſe enemies) which we do and muſt wreſtle with, (inteſtine enemies are in many reſpects the worſt) theſe *war againſt our ſouls*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. and were it not for theſe, all the Devils in Hell could

could do us no hurt: thus this life is to the Saints a warfare, a conflict, and O the wounds, the bruiſes, the blood-ſhed, which they are expoſed unto in this war! now their Peace, and then their Grace, now their Comforts, and then their Conſciences are ſorely wounded, and they lye a bleeding for dayes and weeks and months together; yea ſometimes, like him that was travelling from *Jeruſalem* to *Jericho*, they are wounded, and left half dead, and did not the good *Samaritan* paſs by, take compaſſion on them, and pour in of his wine and oyl, his blood and ſpirit into their wounds, they would ſoon be wholly dead: well, but now, when death comes, that puts an end to this war, aud ſets them all down upon a throne of triumph: *to him that overcometh* (ſayes Chriſt) *will I grant to ſit with me upon my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſate down with my Father on his throne*, Rev. 3. 21. when death comes, then you begin an eternal triumph with Chriſt; then the Palm will be put into your hands, and you ſhall triumphingly cry Victory, Victory for ever. O how ſweet will this be? how

how ſweet is the victory to a Souldier that has been long and hard put to it in the Battel? and indeed, the harder the Battel, the more glorious the Triumph. 'Tis a ſweet and a great ſaying which I have read in *Aug.* to this purpoſe, *The Conqueror*, ſaith he, *triumphs, and unleſs he had fought, he had never conquered; and by how much the greater his danger and difficulty was in the battel, by ſo much the greater is his joy in the triumph.* O Sirs, not only will Death ſet you upon a Mount of Triumph; but know for your incouragement, the ſharper your conflicts and warfare have been here, the more glorious will your triumph be, when Death ſhall ſet you upon the Throne.

Triumphat victor & non vicisset nisi pugnavisset, & quanto majus periculum fuit in prælio tanto majus gaudium in triumpho. Aug.

4. Death, when ever it comes, will change your bondage into liberty, your ſpiritual thraldom into glorious freedom: And is not this a kindneſs? Poor ſoul, one thing which here thou bleedeſt and groaneſt under, is that ſpiritual bondage and thraldom which thou lieſt under: And indeed this world is no other then a Priſon, a Dungeon, an houſe of bondage to thee, the Land of thy Captivity: Here thou lieſt in Chains and

and Fetters, the Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt; yea, and the iron ſometimes enters into thy ſpirit. Hence we read of *the bondage of corruption*, which indeed is the ſoreſt bondage in the world, a worſe bondage ten thouſand times then that which *Iſrael* groaned and ſighed under in *Egypt*, *who* yet *were made to ſerve with rigour, and whoſe lives were made bitter with hard bondage*, Exod. 1. 13, 14. Truly this luſt, and the other luſt, this corruption, and the other corruption, are as ſo many *Egyptians*, cruel Task-maſters, which make thee ſerve with rigour, and thy life bitter to thee with hard bondage: and oh how doſt thou groan and ſigh under the bondage of a proud, dead, hard, carnal, unbelieving heart, an heart bent to backſliding from God? And indeed, who that is ſenſible of it, can but groan under it? This drew that heavy groan from *Paul* and bitter out-cry, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am!* ſays he: Why *Paul*, what is the matter: Oh, ſays he, *I find a law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin and death.* I am by ſin brought into captivity

captivity to ſin, and I have a body of ſin and death lying heavy upon me, heavier then a Mountain of Braſs or Iron; and who can but groan? and as 'twas with him, ſo 'tis with all the Saints in their meaſure: well, but when Death comes Sirs, that will turn all this your bondage into liberty, yea into *the glorious liberty of the children of God*, Rom. 8. 21. that will turn again this your captivity: And oh how ſweet will that be? You have ſome little taſtes of this liberty here: for *where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*, 2 Cor. 3. 7. and the taſtes of it are ſweet, very ſweet: but O how ſweet will the full injoyment on't be? *Paul* breaks out into praiſes in the faith of it before hand, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. 7. 25. O Soul, how ſhould this make thee long for Death? Can a priſon, can an houſe of bondage, can a ſtate of thraldom be pleaſant to thee? Canſt thou be well-pleaſed to lye in chains and fetters of ſin and guilt? Shouldſt thou not rather welcome that, which alone would work thy deliverance?

5. Death, when ever it comes, will be the death of all your ſins, and the perfection

perfection of all your graces: and will not that be a kindneſs? Poor Saint, how doſt thou here bleed and groan under the ſenſe of the life and vigour of thy ſins on the one hand, and of the weakneſs and imperfection of thy graces on the other hand? yea, how great are the conflicts and holy contentions of thy ſpirit, to kill and bring down the one, and to quicken and perfect the other? How doſt thou with the holy *Apoſtle* of old, *forgetting thoſe things which are behind, follow after that thou mayeſt apprehend that for, which alſo thou art apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus, preſſing towards the mark, &c.* Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14. O the watchings, the warrings, the wreſtlings of thy ſoul for more grace, more holineſs, more victory over, and cleanſing from ſin! O the many prayers and tears, ſighs and groans that thou powreſt out between God and thy ſoul in order hereunto! theſe things are the buſineſs of thy life; yea, and after all, ſin is ſtill ſtrong and lively, and grace is ſtill weak and imperfect; the ſenſe of which breaks thy heart almoſt, and makes thee go mourning all the day long: What daily cleanſing thy ſelf,

and yet ſtill unclean? daily perfecting holineſs, yet ſtill imperfect? oh how ſad is this? well, but Soul, when Death comes, things will be ſtrangely alter'd with thee; that will do that for thee in one moment, which thou by a whole life of prayers, tears, faith, watching, warring, labouring, couldſt not do; 'twill make thee perfect: Hence thoſe above are ſaid to be ſo, *the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, Heb. 12. 23. then *all that is imperfect will be done away, and that which is perfect ſhall come*, 1 Cor. 13. 10. perfect grace, perfect holineſs: Now there is much lacking in thy faith, thy love, thy obedience, thy humility, thy heavenlineſs, thy joy and delight in God; but death, when it comes, will make up all in a moment: yea, now thou art ſtained and defiled with ſin, and this luſt and the other luſt ſtirs, and works, and wars within thee; but when death comes, that will purge away all: Death is the Saints only perfect cleanſer through Chriſt: Indeed 'tis ſaid of wicked men and hypocrites, that *their iniquities ſhall lye down with them in the duſt*, Job 20. 11. which is a dreadful word indeed: Death does not kill

their

their ſins; no, they live in the grave, they go with them into the other world, and will there live in them for ever; which will be a great part of their torment: 'twill be indeed (however they may now think of it) the one half of hell; for what is Hell? but ſin at the higheſt, and wrath at the hotteſt: but though it be thus with wicked ones, yet 'tis otherwiſe with the Saints; death through the grace of Chriſt will for ever put a period to their ſin, and perfect their graces: oh ſweet! who would not welcom death?

6. Death, when ever it comes, will ſet thee above all afflictive diſtances between God, Chriſt, the Comforter and thee, and will ſet down thy ſoul in the full, conſtant, and immediate viſion and fruition of all for ever; and is not this ſweet? Poor Saint, here thou complaineſt, that *God is as a ſtranger to thee, and as a way-faring man that turneth aſide to tarry but for a night*: Thou haſt only now and then a ſhort viſit from him, *Jer.* 14.8. Thou complaineſt that *thy beloved withdraws himſelf, and is gone*, Cant. 5. 6. thou complaineſt, that *the Comforter that ſhould relieve thy ſoul*

is far from thee, Lam. 3. 18. thou complaineſt of many ſad and woful diſtances from God, and of the lowneſs of thy comunion; and well thou mayeſt, for indeed, how little a portion is there here ſeen, or injoyed of him by thee? well, but when death comes, that will lift thee above all thoſe diſtances between God and thee, Chriſt and thee, and ſet thee down in the full, conſtant, and immediate viſion and fruition of him for ever; the thoughts of which made *Paul* and others to deſire to be gone, and to chooſe death rather then life, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6, 7, 8. *We are confident* (ſayes he) *knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord, for we walk by faith not by ſight: we are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* Pray obſerve, *Paul* injoyed as much of God and Chriſt here, as moſt did; and yet all that comunion he injoyed here, he accounted as no comunion to that which he ſhould injoy after death; *while we are preſent in the body*, ſayes he, that is, while we live in this world, *we are abſent from the Lord*, abſent from God and Chriſt, our com-

comunion here is but diſtance and eſtrangement, ſo low and inconſtant is it, in compariſon of what we know we ſhall injoy after death; and therefore, ſayes he, we had rather be abſent from the body, we had rather be gone hence, and be preſent with the Lord: death will bring us to anotherguess preſence and injoyment of God and Chriſt, then here we ſhall ever be able to reach unto: alas! all we injoy of God and Chriſt here, is but as an earneſt; ſo the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the verſe foregoing, *He that hath wrought us for this ſelf ſame thing is God, who alſo hath given us the earneſt of the ſpirit*: but, when death comes, we ſhall injoy the full inheritance; all we injoy here is but as the firſt-fruits, *we that have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 23. but when death comes, we ſhall have the full vintage, full incomes of love, full manifeſtations of light, and life, and glory, *fulneſs of joy and pleaſure* in the Divine preſence, *Pſal.* 16. 11. full embraces in Chriſts boſom, full views of his face, full viſions of his glory. Death, when it comes, will bring us to the beatifical viſion, which is all good and happineſs

in one; *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. they do ſee God now, they ſee him by Faith, and thoſe ſights of him are ſweet, glorious, ſoul-raviſhing, and transforming ſights: but after death they ſhall have other ſights of him, ſuch ſights of him as will even infinitely ſurpaſs all that ever they had, or were capable of here. Here *they ſee him but through a glaſs darkly*, that is, they have but low, obſcure, mediate ſights of him; they ſee and injoy but little of him: but when death comes, then *they ſhall ſee him face to face*, that is, fully, clearly, immediately, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. The ſum is, as a Learned man gives it us, that *in this life we have but low and ſlender ſights and injoyments of God, in compariſon of what we ſhall ſee, know, and injoy of him in eternal life.* Here they ſee but his back-parts, as God ſaid to *Moſes*, but when death comes, they ſhall ſee his face, that is, his Glory: here they ſee him but negatively, as it were, what he is not; but then they ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 *Jo.* 3. 2. *we ſhall ſee him as he is*, in all his glorious excellencies and perfections: in ſhort, they ſhall then have ſuch ſights and injoyments of God and

In hac vita tenuem quandam Dei & divinorum myſteriorum cognitionem habemus, ad perfectiſſimam illam vitæ æternæ ſapientiam conferatur. Gloſ. Rhet Sac.

and Chriſt, as ſhall eternally fill, delight, ſolace, ſatisfie, and ſet at reſt their ſouls for ever: ſuch ſights and injoyments, as ſhall ſo ſolace and ſatisfie them, as that there ſhall not be room for the leaſt tittle or iota of a deſire for ever; yea ſuch ſights and injoyments, as ſhall ſo ſatisfie them, as to leave them under an utter impoſſibility of ever turning aſide from them to any thing elſe, and ſo an eternal impoſſibility of ſinning. Oh how ſweet muſt this be! and indeed the School-men, I find, and others from them, give this as one reaſon, why the Saints in Heaven are impeccable; becauſe the ſight and injoyment they have of God there is ſo full and ſatisfying, as that they cannot turn aſide to any thing elſe. O welcome death, that brings us to thoſe ſights, thoſe injoyments of God, the chief good. Once more,

7. Death, when ever it comes, will bring you to, and ſet you down in the injoyment of an eternal Sabboth: and Oh how ſweet is this! *there remaineth a reſt* (the word is, a Sabboth or Sabbatiſm) *to the people of God*, Heb. 4. 9. ay, but when ſhall they injoy it? why truly, when death comes, that will enter

them upon it: immediately, upon the Night of death, dawns the eternal Sabboth. True, the Saints injoy a Sabboth here, and the Sabboth to them is the ſweeteſt and amiableſt day in all the week, 'tis a day of joy and holy feaſting to their ſouls: and O how many times, do your ſouls long for it? but alas theſe Sabboths have an end: but the Sabboth death will ſet them down in, will be an eternal Sabboth, and an eternal Sabboth, wherein they ſhall be imployed in the higheſt acts of worſhip and adoration, even love, praiſe, admiration, and halleluja's for ever; wherein there will be no wearineſs, no faintneſs, wherein there ſhall be no intermiſſion, no going to duties and break off again, as here we do; but an whole Eternity ſhall be imploy'd in acts of Divine worſhip and adoration; wherein there ſhall be no deadneſs, no dulneſs, no ſpiritual indiſpoſitions, no unſuitableneſs in us to thoſe high and holy exerciſes, which this Sabboth will be fill'd with; but our ſouls ſhall be perfectly ſuited to, and fitted for thoſe glorious imploys, wherein, not a few only, and thoſe ſome Saints and ſome Sinners, ſome good and

ſome

ſome bad ſhall joyn together in acts of worſhip; but an innumerable company both of Saints and Angels, and theſe all perfectly holy, *Heb.* 12. 22, 23, 24. Oh how ſweet and glorious will this be? 'Tis a great ſaying which I have read in a worthy Divine, *Sabboths here are comfortable*, ſayes he, *and we have taſted ſome ſweet, ſome comfort in ſome Sabboths; but take all the comfort that ever you had in all the Sabboths you have injoyed here, and all will be nothing to the comforts and ſweetneſs of the eternal Sabboth.* Alas! the perpetual Sabboth that ſhall be hereafter, that will be the accompliſhment of all theſe Sabboths: how ſweet then muſt that be? Oh ye Saints of God, lift up your heads: death will ſet you down in this Sabboth. How have ſome of us longed ſometimes for the coming of the Sabboth? and how have we grieved, when it has been gone? well, but when death comes, that will bring you to a Sabboth that ſhall never end. 'Tis a ſweet ſaying of *Auſtin*, *There* (ſayes he, ſpeaking of Heaven) *is the great Sabboth, a Sabboth that hath no evening, no end, in which we ſhall reſt and behold, behold and love, love and praiſe for ever.* Oh

Ibi maximum Sabbatum non habens veſperam, ibi vacabimus & videbimus, videbimus & amabimus, amabimus & laudabimus. Aug. de Civit. Dei lib. ult. cap. ult.

Oh bleſſed be God for this Sabboth! and bleſſed be God that death, when it comes, ſhall bring us to this Sabboth. Well then, fear not death, dread not death; but be found diligent and faithful in the uſe of the helps preſcribed for the preparing of your ſouls for it; and then 'twill greatly befriend you, whenever it comes, and you may exult and rejoyce in it.

I ſhould now conclude, but I muſt firſt beg all that read this plain Diſcourſe, deeply and frequently to conſider and contemplate theſe things.

1. Every day ſeriouſly conſider and contemplate the exceeding worth of your ſouls, and the great things they are capable of: 'tis ſad to think what low thoughts the moſt of men have of their ſouls: they are content to ſell their ſouls, to loſe their ſouls, to damn their ſouls, and all for a luſt, for a little of this world, a little carnal ſenſual pleaſure and delight here, which is but for a moment. That rebuke which *Auſtin* gave one, is due to the moſt; *How comes it to paſs*, ſayes he, *that among all thy good things, thou wilt let nothing be in an ill caſe but thy ſelf, they ſoul?* Truly the

the moſt of men are ſolicitous to have all well but their Souls; they will have it go well with their Bodies, their Names, their Eſtates, their Families, but their Souls they mind not: but, my Beloved, I beſeech you think deeply and frequently of the worth of your Souls, and the concerns of them: O 'tis your ſoul that is your principal part; Chriſt who beſt knew the worth of ſouls, tells you, that the whole World is nothing to one ſoul, and that the gain of the one can't recompence the loſs of the other, no not in the leaſt, *Mat.* 16. 26. and you know what a price he was pleaſed to pay for ſouls, even his own Blood, his precious Blood, Life and all, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. Beſides, there are two things which ſpeak the ſoul to be a thing of unſpeakable worth and value; its vaſt capacity, and its abſolute immortality. (1) The capacity of the ſoul ſpeaks its worth: Oh what great things is the ſoul of man capable of? there is a kind of infiniteneſs, as a worthy Divine obſerves, in the ſoul of man, 'tis capable of even an infinite happineſs or an infinite miſery, 'tis capable of eternal life or eternal death, 'tis capable of unconceivable

ceivable communications both of love and wrath, and muſt one day be fill'd with the one or the other of them; 'tis capable of knowing God, of bearing his image, of injoying glorious comunion with him, yea of living Gods own life, and in a participation of his own bleſſedneſs: look whatever the Angels injoy, look whatever the human ſoul of Chriſt injoys, that thy ſoul is capable of the injoyment of: Sinner, O how precious does this ſpeak it to be? and how great ſhould thy concern be for it while day and ſeaſon laſts? contemplate it therefore a little and ſay, O how precious is my ſoul, and what great things is it capable of? and it being ſo, why do I take up in ſuch low, poor, dungy, droſſy things, as the beſt of ſin and this world are? (2dly) The immortality of the ſoul argues its worth, the ſoul that never dyes; 'tis indeed but as it were a ſpark, a beam of Gods own immortality breathed into the body, at leaſt there is a ſtamp and impreſs thereof upon it: the body, that dyes, that returns to duſt; but the ſoul, that lives, that goes to God, *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. as the mortality of the body, as a Learned man

man obſerves, ſo the immortality of the ſoul is here aſſerted. Beſides, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, with the reſt of the good old Patriarchs and Servants of God who dyed long ſince, are notwithſtanding living ſtill; ſo Chriſt argues you know, *Mat.* 22. 32. that is, their ſouls live, as indeed do the ſouls of all that are gone hence; their ſouls all live either in happineſs or miſery, with God or Devils, and ſo muſt thine and mine, Sinner; when our body ſhall be eaten by the worms, our ſouls will live either in Heaven or Hell: Oh think of this, daily contemplate and ſay, I have a ſoul within me that muſt live for ever, and that as filled with even an infinite happineſs or miſery; I have a ſoul within me that is capable of unſpeakable joys or unconceivable torments, and in the one or the other it will, it muſt live, for ever: why then am I not more concerned for it?

2. Seriouſly contemplate, and daily ſoak your ſpirits in the thoughts of the wonderful weight and importance of Eternity, the greatneſs of the concern of the other world. O Eternity, Eternity! O vaſt, great, boundleſs Eternity! how

how ſhall I do to ſpeak of thee? how are my thoughts loſt, and my ſpirit overwhelmed, when I ſet my ſelf to contemplate how great, how weighty a thing thou art? an endleſs, boundleſs, bottomleſs ſtate; a ſtate that admits of neither change, pauſe, or period for ever; a ſtate of unconceivable happineſs or miſery; happineſs in the injoyment, or miſery in the loſs of, and baniſhment from God and Chriſt for ever; happineſs in the fruition of infinite love, or miſery in the revelation of infinite wrath, one of which every ſoul muſt be the object of for ever. Eternity! ſuch is the weight of it in it ſelf, that indeed we know not how to conceive of it, every thing but Eternity has an end, a laſt: ſo innumerable as the Stars of Heaven are, yet there is a laſt Star, and the number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it; ſo innumerable as the Sands on the Sea-ſhore are, yet there is a laſt Sand, and the number of them has an end, could we reach to it; ſo numerous as the piles of Graſs, which are now, and from the Creation of the world have been, and to the end of the world ſhall be, are, yet there is an end of

of the number of them, could we reach it, there is a laſt pile, a laſt ſpire of Graſs; ſo innumerable as the grains of Corn, in all the Harveſts that ever were or ſhall be, are, yet the number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it, and there is a laſt grain; ſo innumerable as all the drops of rain that ever did fall, or ſhall fall upon the Earth, from the Creation to the end of the world, are, yet ſtill there is a laſt drop, yea and that though all the drops contained in the wide and deep Sea be added thereunto; ſo innumerable as the children of men have been, are, and ſhall be, to the end of all things; ſo innumerable as all the hairs of the head of them all have been, are, and will be; ſo innumerable as all the thoughts of the hearts of all throughout all ages have been, are, and will be; ſo innumerable as all the Bruits and Animals, which both the Earth and the Sea have brought forth, do and will bring forth, are and will be, yet ſtill the number of them has an end, could we reach it, and there is a laſt man, a laſt hair, a laſt thought, a laſt animal: ſhould all the vaſt body of the Heavens, which our eyes behold, be full written with

with figures by the hand of an Angel; yet the number of those figures would have an end, and there would be a last figure: but as for Eternity, that has no end, no last: could all those vast numbers prementioned be put together into one, who could in the least conceive of the thousand thousandth part of it? yet all this were nothing to Eternity, no not the thousand thousandth part of it: thus Eternity is unconceivably weighty in it self, and 'tis Eternity indeed that puts weight into all other things: 'tis Eternity that puts weight into the future Judgment: what were that Judgment, but that 'tis Eternal Judgment? *Heb.* 6. 2. 'Tis Eternity that puts weight indeed into the happiness and joys of Heaven: what were that happiness and those joys, were they not Eternal? hence 'tis call'd *Eternal life*, *Eternal glory*, *a never-fading Crown*, *an everlasting Kingdom*, *joy and pleasure for evermore*: So (you know) the Scripture speaks of it, as that which is its crown and perfection: hence we read of *being for ever with the Lord*, 1 *Thes.* 4. 17. to be with the Lord is sweet, *Peter* found it so: all the Saints in their measure find

find it ſo here: but to be with the Lord [for ever,] that makes it infinitely ſweet indeed: thus and thus [for ever] in the boſom of my Fathers love, and there [for ever;] in the views of my Redeemers glory, and there [for ever;] joyned in with an innumerable company of Angels in loving praiſing, admiring, adoring, and ſinging hallelujahs to God and the Lamb, and this [for ever;] to be fully ſwallowed up in the Divine life, the Divine will, the Divine preſence, the Divine fulneſs, and this [for ever;] to be ſet above all ſin, to be delivered from an unavoidable neceſſity of ſinning, to an abſolute impoſſibility of ſinning, and this [for ever;] O how ſweet, how glorious is this! this one word *Eternity*, or for ever, is that which puts great ſweetneſs into it. Again, 'tis Eternity that indeed puts weight into the miſeries and torments of the damned: what were the fire of Hell, were it not unquenchable fire? what were the worm there, were it not a never-dying worm? when the Scripture would ſpeak of the exceeding greatneſs and ſeverity of thoſe torments, (you know) 'tis in this language: *there the worm never dyes, and the fire is*

never quenched, Mark 9. 44. their miſeries and torments are eternal, and indeed Hell would be no Hell in compariſon, had it not Eternity in it. Moſt weighty is the meditation which I have read in a learned and holy man to this purpoſe; *O Eternity! Eternity! O never-ending Eternity! O Eternity that can be meaſured by no ſpaces of time, that can be perceived or apprehended by no human intellect or underſtanding! how unconceiveably doſt thou augment the torments of the damned?* and but a few lines after he again cryes out, *O Eternity! Eternity! thou and thou alone doſt aggravate the torments, the puniſhments of the damned, beyond all meaſure.* Heavy is the puniſhment of the damned becauſe of its ſharpneſs, its extenſiveneſs, its univerſality, there being all plagues and puniſhments in it; but, ſayes he, it is moſt heavy becauſe of its Eternity. Oh 'tis this indeed that makes it intollerably great and heavy. O not only to be baniſh'd from God and Chriſt, to be driven from the beatifical viſion; but to be baniſh'd and driven from hence [for ever;] O doleful! to be in the flames, to ſuffer the vengeance of Eternal fire, to be ſinning and always bearing the puniſhment of ſin,

O æternitas interminabilis, O æternitas nullis temporum ſpaciis menſuralibus, O æternitas nullo intellectu humano perceptibilis, quantum auges damnatorum ſupplicia? ——

O æternitas, æternitas, tu ſola ultra modum ſupplicia damnatorum, ex ageras, gravis eſt damnatorum pœna, &c. Gerh

ſin, and all this [for ever;] O this makes it out of meaſure heavy, thus and always thus, under the wrath of God, and for ever ſo! this puts weight into it. Thus you ſee a little of the weight of Eternity, O contemplate it daily.

3. Conſider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miſcarry for ever; and on the other hand, what a wide door of mercy there is open to you, and the fair opportunity you have of making a bleſſed proviſion for your Souls and Eternity.

1. Conſider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miſcarry for ever, to periſh eternally; the more worth there is in the ſoul, and the greater weight there is in Eternity, the more doleful it will be to periſh or miſcarry, as to the intereſt of them: to miſcarry in our Eſtate, in our Trade, in our Name, in the change of our Condition in this world, or the like, this is ſad, and ſinks many; but Oh what is this to the miſcarriage of the ſoul for ever? what is this to a miſerable Eternity, to the loſs of God, of Chriſt, of the Comforter, of Heaven, and Eternal life? what is this to the wrath of God, to the vengeance of Eternal fire, to utter dark-

neſs, to blackneſs of darkneſs for ever O Sirs! to have Infiniteneſs and Eternity combined againſt you to make you miſerable, and to be for ever as miſerable as Infiniteneſs and Eternity can make you, (as aſſuredly you will, in caſe you neglect to make proviſion for your ſouls and the future life) O how dreadful, how doleful will this be? and what bitter lamentations will it fill you with for ever? Did *Eſau* weep when he had loſt the Birth-right? and did *Lyſichamus* upbraid himſelf, and bewail his folly for parting with his Kingdom for a draught of water? O then how will you weep and wail, and even tear and torment your ſelves for ever, for your ſin and folly, when you ſhall find, that for a little of this world, for the ſatisfaction of a luſt, for a few dreggy, droſſy pleaſures and ſenſual delights, or perhaps through a meer ſloth of ſpirit, you have loſt your ſouls, and have plunged your ſelves into an infinite Ocean of Eternal woe and miſery, whence there is no redemption for ever for you? Pray lay that Scripture to heart now, *Lu.* 13. 27, 28. *Depart from me*, ſayes Chriſt, *all ye workers of iniquity*: depart, here is the doom that will paſs at laſt upon every

every unrepenting, unbelieving Sinner, every ſoul that makes not ready for a dying hour; well and what then? *there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth; when ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets in the kingdom of God, and you thruſt out.* O Sirs, when you ſhall ſee ſuch and ſuch lodged ſafe in Heaven, in the boſom of Chriſt, and your ſelves ſhut out, and not only ſo, but caſt into utter darkneſs, as you have it added *Mat.* 8. 12. when you ſhall ſee your ſelves ſhut up in the infernal pit, and there ſeal'd up under Gods eternal wrath; O then you will weep and gnaſh your teeth indeed; then your own Conſcience will be eternally a ſecond Hell to you, tearing and tormenting your ſouls, in the remembrance of your ſin and folly in neglecting to prepare for, and make ſure of a better ſtate. Think of theſe things ere it be too late.

Horrendum mœrorem hic deſignat. Calv. in loc.

2. Conſider and contemplate what a wide door of mercy there is open to you, and what a fair opportunity God gives you, to make a bleſſed proviſion for your ſouls and Eternity. What ſhall I ſay? why Sirs, the way of Salvation is made plain to you, and you are daily called to the Marriage-Supper of the

Lamb

Lamb; the great King of Heaven invites you to come and partake of his Goſpel-Feaſt, by one and another Servant of his which he ſends to you, he lets you know that all things are ready, all that your ſouls can need, to make them happy for ever; Chriſt is ready, and in him, Life is ready, Grace is ready, Peace is ready, Pardon is ready, a compleat Righteouſneſs for your juſtification and acceptation with God is ready, Heaven is ready, Salvation is ready, and withall he bids you come, yea he earneſtly importunes and ſolicites you to come, and feaſt your ſouls upon theſe things; he freely and frequently offers himſelf and all to you, intreating your acceptance: yea more, he opens the arms of his love to you, aſſuring you of moſt cordial welcome, and ready reception, notwithſtanding all your ſins and miſcarriages; *him that cometh unto me, I will by no means caſt out*, Jo. 6. 37. let him be who and what he will, a young, an old ſinner, a ſmall, a great ſinner, a ſinner that hath ſtood it out againſt me, a little or a long time, I will not caſt him out, my Grace is free, my Fulneſs is large and ſufficient, my Blood is precious, and has an infinite

virtue

virtue in it, my Spirit is powerful and efficacious, I am every way mighty to ſave, able to ſave to the utmoſt all that come to God by me; yea 'tis my work and buſineſs to ſave, my Father ſeal'd and ſent me for that end, and for that end came I into the world, and there did and ſuffered ſuch things as I did; and I may not, I will not caſt off any poor ſoul that will come and partake of me and my Fulneſs, and that would fain be helped on towards ''te and bleſſedneſs: This is really the language of Chriſt to poor Sinners; yea more, he ſends his Spirit to enlighten, to convince, to perſwade, to draw and allure them, and he does move in them, and ſtrive with them: O what a wide door of mercy is there here open to you, Sirs! and how fair is your opportunity of preparing for, and making ſure of, a bleſſed Eternity? O accordingly, as you love your ſouls, and would live for ever, come in to Chriſt, come and apply and improve him in a way of believing, for the good of your eternal ſouls; in his ſtrength ſet upon repenting, believing work, the work of your ſouls and Eternity; and your day being ſo bright as indeed it is, O labour to know the things

of

of your Peace in your day, leſt neglecting them, Chriſt ſpeedily ſay of you, as once with tears in his eyes he did of neglecting *Jeruſalem*, *Luk.* 19. 42. *O that thou hadſt known in thy day the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* — I have done: I'le cloſe all, with that Holy wiſh for you, my dear Congregation, and my ſelf, that *Auſtin* was wont to make for himſelf and his people, namely, *That as they had been often crowded together to worſhip God in that Earthly Temple wherein he preach'd, ſo they might eternally live together in the Heavenly Temple above*: So my wiſh and deſire is, that we, my Beloved, you and I, who have often been throng'd and crowded together in an Earthly Houſe, may live together eternally, and eternally adore God together in our Fathers Houſe above; and if we ſhall never preach, and pray, and hear, and ſing together more on Earth, (as I am apt to think we ſhall not) yet that we may praiſe, and love, and admire God, and ſing halleluja's to him for ever together in Heaven. *Amen, Amen.*

Ut quemadmodum in Templo terreno eſſent coacti, ita & in cæleſti illo Templo æternè unà viverent.

FINIS.